



Hartford Smith College Club

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2009-2010

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BOOK AWARDS CHAIR

Heather Page '00

President's Note

By Michelle Doucette Cunningham '88

Last month I had the opportunity to visit with an old friend I hadn't seen in many years. We worked together for a short time when I was just out of college, and the connection was one that has lasted more than twenty years. Through the changes of marriage, child rearing, moving across the country and living abroad, divorce, remarriage, two graduate degrees, and seven major job changes between the two of us, we have stayed important to one another.

On the long flight home I reflected that I haven't been "the perfect friend" that stays in touch frequently—my devotion has always been more of the heart than of action, but three days together erased all the time and distance between us.

I feel this way too about my friends from Smith, that time and distance disappear once we reconnect. So I'm hoping that this thought will urge you to reconnect with someone you haven't spoken to in a while, maybe a friend from Smith—send a card, or an e-mail, or give them a call. Or for those of you who prefer shorter electronic communication, send a text or a tweet that says you're thinking of them.

My friend in California sent me a quote:

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

—Steve Jobs, American Entrepreneur, Apple co-founder

Smith College was excellent preparation to help us follow our dreams, in whatever form they may take. And as we follow our dreams, don't forget to share your heart with others, no matter how far away they may seem, because sometimes it is by connecting with others that we remember who we want to become.

A newsletter update on Hartford Smith Club By-Laws will be available on-line May 11, 2010 at:
<http://alumnae.smith.edu/smithcms/hartford/>.

Please consider becoming a member of the Hartford Smith College Club! A membership form is enclosed.

THERE ARE HSC BOARD POSITIONS OPEN!

We are accepting nominations for the following roles:

- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Membership Chair

Contact Club President Michelle Doucette Cunningham:
hartfordsmithcollegeclub@gmail.com



Spring Greetings from the Editor

Anne Wettersten '92

"The moments of happiness we enjoy take us by surprise. It is not that we seize them, but that they seize us."—Ashley Montagu

This newsletter season many of us have been contemplating women's lives and life choices as we participate in book group discussions, a Smith Museum of Art symposium, as well as outreach to fellow alumnae and prospective Smithies. As noted in our book group discussion of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, the making of new connections and renewing of older ones often happens with serendipitous beauty. These experiences can feature unexpected boundary crossings that first stun and then delight us. We might think of the words of Guernsey's fictional Eben Ramsey and his benediction for the channel island community's beloved resident and neighbor, Elizabeth McKenna after her imprisonment by the Germans during WWII: "We clung to books and to our friends; they reminded us that we had another part to us. Elizabeth used to say a poem. I don't remember all of it, but it began 'Is it so small a thing to have enjoyed the sun, to have light in the spring, to have loved, to have thought, to have done, to have advanced true friends?' It isn't." Inspiring, elegiac, and sometimes disarmingly moving words for those who love books abound in this novel. Warm wishes for this season of renewal!

A Flurry of Book Group Activity This Spring

Where else can you meet with a bunch of fantastic, bright, interesting, and *well-educated* women to discuss some really great books? That's right, our very own book group. I hesitate to use the term book "club" as there are no initiation rites or fees to join. The only requirement is to come to a meeting now and then and contribute to the conversation. If you're interested in getting involved with this group, now is the time.

In April, we have a fabulous discussion lined up that will be facilitated by Jennifer Walters, Smith's Dean of Religious Life! We'll be discussing *The Maytrees* by Annie Dillard; the *New York Times* review of this book was titled "A Natural History of Love." Our June book selection meeting is one of the best ones to attend. At this meeting, we gather to discuss which books we want to read as a group the following year (we follow the academic calendar September through June). It's a lot of fun and a great dialogue. For more information, please check our website, or e-mail amy87@alumnae.smith.edu.



*The Hartford Smith College Club
Holiday Party at Amy Magno's
House in December 2009*

HARTFORD AREA ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Name: Elizabeth Myung Sook Krause

Class Year: 2000

House: Scales

Major: Psychology

Favorite Smith Memory: Afternoon tea! I fell in love with this tradition and even had an afternoon tea wedding reception.

What town do you currently live in: West Hartford

Family Tidbit: Husband Jeff is an airline pilot

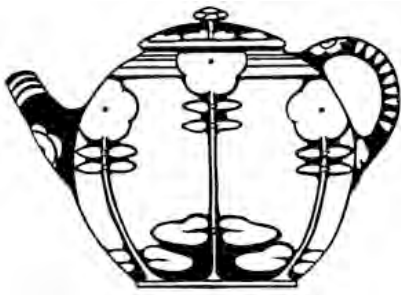
What do you do professionally and/or what are you involved with in the greater Hartford community?: By day, I am a Sr. Program Officer at the Connecticut Health Foundation. My job is to grant money to organizations that are doing important work to improve health care systems, particularly for the benefit of the underserved. I am on the board of the National Association of Asian Professionals--Connecticut, a Leadership Greater Hartford Ambassador, and a member of the state's Commission on Health Equity.

What has being involved in the club meant to you?: One of Smith's greatest assets is its network of

alumnae and what better way to connect with local alumnae than through my local club? Also, I received an e-mail recently from a first year student from Bloomfield whom I interviewed when she was an applicant. It touched my heart and reminded me how meaningful being involved with the Club's recruiting activities can be.



REAL LIVES OF WOMEN ARTISTS: A RECENT SMITH SYMPOSIUM



By Anne Guernsey, Class of 2001

In the midst of a typical (and beautiful) New England snowstorm, the Smith College Museum of Art offered the informative Emily Hall Tremaine Symposium, *Real Lives of Women Artists*, February 26-27, 2010. I had the opportunity to attend as an alumna and as a representative of the

Connecticut Historical Society, promoting our upcoming exhibition on female needlework artists from the state. The two-day event featured a wide variety of panelists: from well-known and dedicated female artists engaged in multimedia to female curators, dealers, and other art professionals. All came together to discuss their work and, frequently, their choices about family life. The symposium joined alumnae and the general public across professions and generations in a provocative dialogue.

I had a wonderful experience. Not only did I learn more about trends in the field, but I was able to meet many fascinating women—some of whom have mastered the art of juggling

career and family. One bit of advice that really resonated in the minds of the younger audience members was offered by accomplished abstract painter Rebecca Morris '91, who recommended that women make a point to at least think about whether we want children because otherwise we might regret it down the road. Some of us who grew up in the 1980s were raised with the expectation to be the best at everything—both personally and professionally. But sometimes being a so-called superwoman comes with great sacrifice in terms of career, family, and health. The conference attempted to reconcile the roles and aspirations of women today.



PAYING IT FORWARD: THE REWARDS OF VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ALUMNAE ADMISSION PROGRAM

By Elizabeth Krause, '00

Back in 1996, I was a senior at a suburban Seattle public high school. The guidance counselors at my school were equipped to send accomplished students to the University of Washington, middling students to Washington State University, and struggling students to the local community college. When I expressed interest in a women's college, they encouraged me to re-think the University of Washington.

Aside from the glossy prospectus featuring empowered-looking students amongst October foliage, it was my interview with a local alumnae admission volunteer that first gave me a feel for the mysterious private college 3,000 miles away. Northampton, MA might as well have been Timbuktu. The alumna emphasized what Smith meant to her and took an interest in me and my future success. She gave me her personal copy of Jill Kerr Conway's *Road to Coorain* because she thought I would get something out of it. My interview played a large role in my decision to matriculate.

Fast-forward more than a decade. I am now an alumnae admission volunteer myself. Interacting with prospective students and their families is engaging and keeps me connected with new directions in which the college is moving. I have preferred to focus my efforts on young women from my West Hartford town of residence and on young women from underrepresented minority groups. Smith is a higher education leader in diversity and equity.

I want to share with the club a recent experience that illustrates the difference we can make as alumnae

volunteers. In the winter of 2009, I interviewed an extraordinary Hartford Classical Magnet School senior from Bloomfield. She immediately impressed me—she was musical, an athlete, and involved with student government. She had done her homework about Smith and had many questions. When I wrote my report to Smith, I strongly recommended her.

The spring rolled around and I got an e-mail from the young woman updating me on her status: "When I received my [Smith] notification online, I was wait-listed. By this news I was very distraught and dealt with the news slowly. After visiting other schools that I was accepted to, I had a great connection with [X] College and sent in my enrollment fee. Then yesterday, I received a call from Smith, stating that I have been accepted. Now I am confused and uncertain what school I should attend."

I replied with a lengthy missive congratulating her on getting admitted to both schools, validating the difficult decision, and giving her my take on what differentiates Smith from other colleges. "In terms of your question about how Smith would prepare you for the future," I wrote, "here's what I personally have gotten out of it":

- Name recognition and reputation of the school. To this day, people in the know are very impressed when they learn I went to Smith.
- High expectations. Smith expects its graduates to succeed in life and instills in them a sense of duty to lead.
- Confidence
- Support as a woman of color
- An academically rigorous experience. Education isn't about receiving information or memorizing facts. It's about

learning how to think intelligently and critically.

- A true liberal arts education. Smithies can talk about politics, history, the arts. Intellectual curiosity isn't always valued in American society, but I think people underestimate how it can help you get ahead in life and be a more interesting person.
- Preparation for graduate school. I went straight into Harvard from Smith. Every Smithie I know who has wanted to pursue an advanced degree has accomplished that goal, though everyone is on a different timeline.
- Alumnae network for internships, jobs, and friendship. It's an unusually tight and supportive alumnae network.

I won't keep readers in suspense. She chose Smith. I got a message from her in December updating me on her first semester and I am thrilled to report that she is thriving. She wrote: "I love everything and have embraced everything that Smith has to offer. I did the Bridge program this August and it was a very intense and emotional look [at] diversity [at] Smith. The people that I have met from the Bridge Program are my closest friends. I live in Emerson (the Quad) and love my roommate! ...I have learned to accept everyone and just love the Smith community. I am taking full advantage of the liberal arts courses and I am taking Intro. to Black Culture (Afro-American studies), Ecodiversity (Bio), and Writing the Wave (Writing Intensive). I have a lot of work and I am always busy. But I know at the end of the day all of the work I do is worth it."

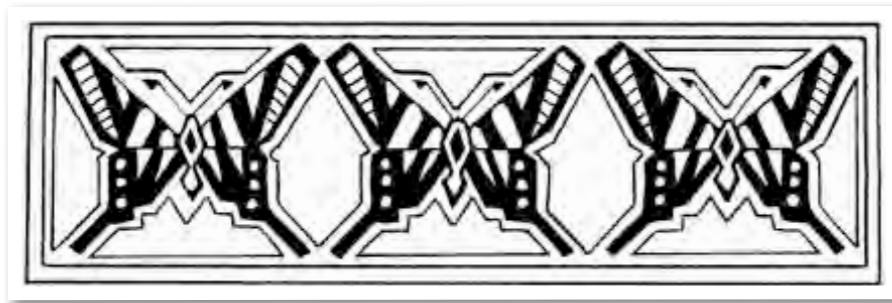
The Hartford alumnae admission program would be nothing without the dedication of coordinator Heather Page '00. I encourage readers to contact Heather to learn how you can volunteer.

A LITTLE MADNESS IN THE SPRING

A little Madness in the Spring
 Is wholesome even for the King,
 But God be with the Clown—

Who ponders this tremendous scene—
 This whole Experiment of Green—
 As if it were his own!

--Emily Dickinson



WOMEN IN ART: ACTIVISM ON BEHALF OF WOMEN ARTISTS

By Anne Wettersten '92

The Guerilla Girls are a witty and edgy performance activist group first formed in New York City in the mid-1980s. This small collective of anonymous women assume the names of deceased and well-known women artists and don gorilla masks in performances at major (and frequently male-dominated) art events. According to the feminist group sometimes self-described as “the conscience of the art world,” there are some glaring advantages of being a woman artist:

“Working without the pressure of success

Not having to be in shows with men

Having an escape from the art world with your four free-lance jobs

Knowing your career will pick up after you are eighty
 Being reassured that whatever art you make it will be labeled ‘feminine’

Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position

Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others

Having the opportunity of choosing between career and motherhood

Being included in revised versions of art history

Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius”

The Guerilla Girls are still active today and have a website at <www.Guerrillagirls.com>.

STAY CONNECTED TO THE CLUB!

Website: <http://alumnae.smith.edu/smithcms/hartford/>

Our website has an updated look and a new home!

Please bookmark this new link today. Facebook: Smith College Club of Hartford.

HARTFORD SMITH COLLEGE CLUB
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Book Award Update

Hi Ladies!

With the arrival of spring, the Hartford Smith College Club's Book Award Program is getting underway. Every year, the Hartford Club gives gifts of books to young women from area high schools who demonstrate the academic excellence, leadership, and service to their communities that characterize the thousands of women who have graduated from Smith College. This is a great way to honor the accomplishments of some wonderful high school students and to spread the word about Smith in our communities. Last year, the club gave awards to 29 high school juniors from 28 schools in Hartford County, both public and private. This year, we are hoping to increase this number to 30 schools, with particular attention to putting

out the word on Smith to high schools within the City of Hartford. The book that we have selected for 2010 is *Ariel: The Restored Edition* by Sylvia Plath '55.

As the Club develops and expands its book award program, alumnae input and support will be helpful and very much appreciated. If you know of a school that is deserving of inclusion in our program, please let us know. If you know of a book with a Smith connection that would capture a young woman's imagination, please let us know. A donation of \$25.00 would cover the cost of a book and postage and would enable us to add one more school to our program. Certain schools ask if Smith alumnae can attend their award ceremonies to

present these awards or be available to make contact with the recipients in order to tell them about the Smith experience. There are *many* ways to get involved in this worthy cause. Anyone interested in helping with this program, please contact Heather Page.

Thank you again for all that you do for Smith!

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