



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

November 2012
Vol. 9, No. 3

www.townofchapelhill.org

On the Front Burner



Column from Town Manager
Roger L. Stancil

Change. Two department heads have retired in the last two months, Kathy Thompson and Steve Spade. Other people have retired or left the Town. It reminds me that the Town organization lives through its people. As the players change, the Team changes. Our Values of RESPECT and our facilitative leadership model demonstrate who we are but they require constant attention and nurturing care to maintain. How have you demonstrated RESPECT today or used one of the Values in a conversation?

While two department heads left, two people returned: **Dwight Bassett** as our Economic Development Officer and **Christina Strauch** in Communications and Public Affairs. Welcome them back. They demonstrate the attraction of our organization. Their jobs will be a little different, but they return as valued members of the Team.

Apps. Ever wish there was an app you could download to your mobile device that would make your job easier or help residents communicate with the Town? If you have an idea, let me know. We are working on ways to develop apps that will help the Town take advantage of this opportunity to improve our communication.

Vote. Do not miss the opportunity to influence the future and the world we live in today. With Early Voting, there is no reason for anyone to fail to exercise their right to vote.

Fred Sparrow

Profile by Lauren Edmonds,
CaPA Volunteer (UNC Apples)

Fred Sparrow, better known as Freddy by his friends and co-workers, is a long-time resident of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and has been working as a service attendant for Chapel Hill Transit. He started in January 2007 after spending most of his life working in masonry and plumbing.

“One of my friends brought me some paperwork,” Sparrow said. “He told me, ‘It’s about time for you to get inside instead of working outside. Get your foot in the door.’ That’s how this started.”

A favorite part of his job at Chapel Hill Transit is getting to meet new people and joke around with his co-workers.

When Sparrow isn’t working evenings servicing and fueling the Chapel Hill buses he spends his free time riding motorcycles with Bennie, his wife of 46 years, and friends.

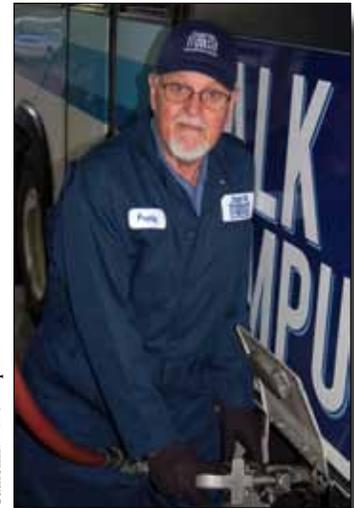
The couple often likes to ride around Orange County, including Hillsborough, where their daughter lives. Sparrow also enjoys longer trips to see more of the state.

“People don’t realize how beautiful North Carolina is until you get out in the country. You don’t have to go anywhere to see beauty, it’s right around us,” Sparrow said. “You can really see the countryside riding a motorcycle.”

Sparrow is known around Chapel Hill Transit for being one of the “behind the scenes” employees who makes it possible to serve

Value in the Spotlight

Teamwork



Catherine Lazorko photo

customers every day and always being willing to lend a hand. He works late hours fueling, servicing and sweeping out the buses to make sure they will be ready to go first thing in the morning.

“He is one member of our team who always does a great job, is always willing to take on more and help his fellow employee — and is always positive,” said Brian Litchfield, Interim Transit Director.

If you know another outstanding Chapel Hill employee that should be featured in TOWNtalk, contact Catherine Lazorko at 969-5055 or clazorko@townofchapelhill.org.

COMING UP

Tuesday, Nov. 6: Reception for new Nurse Practitioner Liska Lackey, 2–3:30 p.m., Town Hall First Floor Conference Room

Thursday, Nov. 15: Lunch and Learn, Starting an Exercise Program, Noon, Hargraves Center

Friday, Nov. 16: Arbor Day Celebration, 10:30 a.m., Southern Community Park

Nov. 22–23: Town Holiday

Saturday, Dec. 8: Chapel Hill-Carrboro Holiday Parade, 10 a.m.



Get out and vote! Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 6.

In Brief



Dwight Bassett will return to the Town as Economic Development Officer and part of the Town team devoted to

policy and strategic initiatives supporting the goals of Chapel Hill 2020.



Jason Damweber (Manager) and his wife Amanda welcomed a new member of the family, Emmett Singleton, on Oct. 24. Emmett weighed 7 lbs. 11.5 oz. and was 21 inches long.

DeShauna Dudley, daughter of **Tracy Dudley** (Parking Services), played the role of young Celie in North Carolina Central University's production of "The Color Purple" in October.

Liska Lackey will join the Wellness@

Work program in November as Nurse Practitioner. She will work closely with Michele Gibson, RN, and Dr. Mark Gwynne. When Liska is not at work, she enjoys finding opportunities to give back to the community. She is currently a volunteer FNP in the homeless shelter clinic and RN representative on the Orange County Board of Health.

Christina Strauch has returned to the Town in a new position as Administrative Technician II in the Communications and Public Affairs (CaPA) Department. Please stop by and welcome her back!



TOWNtalk is produced by the Communications and Public Affairs Department
Editorial/Graphics: Catherine Lazorko,
Melanie Miller

Get in the know! Check out www.townofchapelhill.org/socialmedia

By **Katie Barbee**
CaPA volunteer (UNC-Apples)

Do you follow @chapelhillgov on Twitter? Have you liked the Town of Chapel Hill on Facebook? If not, you're missing out! Connecting with your employer via social media can be a valuable communication strategy, and it has the power to boost productivity and spark engaging conversations in the workplace.

Keeping informed of the latest events in your career field is essential to performing your job effectively. One of the benefits of using social media is having this kind of up-to-date information at your fingertips as soon as it is available. Employees who are connected with their employers through social media websites have access to the most recent news trends relevant to their line of work, which can be a major advantage in maximizing job efficiency.

Responsible use of social media also offers employees the opportunity to join in on conversations with their employers as well as with fellow colleagues. Social networking websites

provide a platform for management to have quick, transparent contact with employees while giving them a chance to respond and deliver feedback. Additionally, employees who use social media to learn about career and community events are often encouraged to interact with each other to share common interests and concerns, which can foster a more personable and enjoyable workplace atmosphere.

So get connected and start talking! And if you aren't familiar with the Town of Chapel Hill's activity on social networks, check out a few of the latest updates you may have missed at www.townofchapelhill.org/socialmedia.



Does your paycheck seem bigger? That's because Town of Chapel Hill employees have received an across-the-board pay raise effective in October. All full- and part-time benefitted employees received a three percent pay raise. The increase was recommended by Town Manager Roger Stancil and approved by the Town Council in the FY2012-13 budget.

"The Town's ability to maintain a high level of service delivery and high customer satisfaction, as shown in the recent community survey, is directly attributable to the quality and dedication of our workforce," Town Manager Stancil said in his budget recommendation to the Council.

The last pay adjustment for employees was in FY2008-09. Since that time employees have received two one-time payments of \$800 each in FY2010-11 and FY2011-12, but no increase to their base salary.

For the seventh year in a row, Chapel Hill is among the top 5 North Carolina communities for its efforts to promote traffic safety. Chapel Hill received the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's top award as the "**North Carolina Traffic Safe Community of the Year**" for 2012.

Take a break from work and get some exercise! Aerobics with **Angie Turner** (Public Works) meets from noon to 12:45 p.m. on Mondays at Hargraves Center, 216 N. Roberson St. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. The Bolin Creek Trail Walking Group meets from noon to 12:45 p.m. on Tuesdays through Dec. 11 (no meeting Nov. 20). Meet at the trailhead at the Community Center. Learn more about wellness programs for Town employees at chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/programs.

It's time to do the ANNUAL HRA! Improve your health and receive discounts and incentives. To complete the HRA, fill out the questionnaire at <https://fms.fammed.unc.edu/cf/toch> and complete two clinic visits.

If you did the HRA last year, you'll need to do it again annually to be eligible for incentives and benefits, including a discount on Kinetix membership and free access to Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation gyms and pools. The HRA offers incentives for stopping smoking, reducing high blood pressure, weight loss, reducing cholesterol, or reducing high blood sugar.

Questions? Contact the clinic at 968-2796.

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Please recycle with white paper.



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Express Yourself!

Second Annual Word Project

Town of Chapel Hill Employee Poetry/Lyric Writing Contest

In honor and celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Town employees, sharpen your pencils and write a poem/lyric in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It should either emphasize the values espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Brotherhood, Non-Violence, Justice, Morality or Action) or be based on the life of Dr. King or on any direct quote from Dr. King. All poetry forms will be accepted — metered verse, haiku, free form, musical lyric, etc.

Winners will have their poems/lyrics displayed on bus cards in Chapel Hill Transit buses from January through March 2013. All poems submitted will be displayed at the Community Center and at Public Works. Winners will also have the opportunity to read/perform their poems/lyrics at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Employee Celebration, tentatively scheduled for Jan. 18 at Hargraves Center.

Kay McDaniel, who submitted the first place entry in the 2011 Word Contest, says: “Previously, I had never written a poem. In fact, I did not think I had a chance of placing. However, to my surprise, not only did I place, I won. If I can do it, you can do it!”

Entries will be judged by special guest judge C.J. Suitt, founder of the Sacrificial Poets, a national youth poetry organization.

Winning entries will receive the following awards:

- First Place - \$100
- Second Place - \$50
- Third Place - \$25
- Honorable Mention - \$15

Entries must be received by Wednesday, Dec. 5. Entries can be submitted by email to nyork@townofchapelhill.org or in person at the Parks and Recreation Administrative Office, 200 Plant Road.

The Chapel Hill Public and Cultural Arts Office, Chapel Hill Transit, Parks & Recreation Department and the juror, reserve the right to accept or deny any entry for any reason including, but not limited to, appropriateness for display in a public space.

The Word Project is organized and sponsored by the Town of Chapel Hill Public & Cultural Arts office in conjunction with the Chapel Hill Transit, Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments.

Ask the Ombuds

by Faith Thompson and Jim Huegerich

The only constant in today's workplace is change, and often it happens quickly, before you can mentally prepare. Keeping your area running smoothly means learning how to cope with the changes and how to help others.

Change is and always has been an inevitable part of life. But change and adversity are difficult paths to traverse, especially in work settings where the challenges may abruptly alter the course of one's career and lifestyle.

Employees face challenges with people and technology that cause frustration. People fear that they will be transferred to unfamiliar positions.

The perception (and sometimes reality) of little control over workplace events triggers increased tension, uncertainty, anger, and other forms of job stress.

Employees may even fear losing their jobs. Underlying the physical workplace — and exerting a powerful influence on it — is an emotional playing structure that can help or hinder our personal reaction to change. Effectively managing your emotional structure means:

- Not fearing or resisting change and challenges, but making sure that you have all the necessary information, skills and resources to effectively manage these life changes.
 - Strategically preparing yourself and others for better organizational performance — regardless what changes you might face.
- Effectively managing the workplace would mean:
- Reduction of counterproductive behavior
 - Improvement of the organization's collaborative thinking,

- Increased cooperation among colleagues, and
- Enhanced customer service — even in the midst of change and reorganization.

How the Organization is prepared to assist:

Leadership Preparation: The Town Manager's Office and HRD, along with others, are working with departments to help them identify and understand the emotional landscape of change and provide them with tools to address issues.

“Calling You Out:” Unexamined emotions negatively affect whole work groups and even customer service interactions. Employees can become aware of how they express their emotions and how their communication, body language, speech and behavior impact the overall group. Seek help from people who can help you identify these behaviors.

Communicate Early and Often: Rumors and innuendo, if allowed to spread randomly, are extremely harmful. Keep everyone updated on decisions directly or indirectly affecting staff. This includes you: “Sharing all relevant information,” “Transparency” and “Testing Assumptions” are three effective tools in ensuring that accurate information is provided to everyone. The Ombuds Office is a resource to help employees navigate these challenges and changes while ensuring that employees maximize the three things that the Town Manager identified as important for all of us in the September TOWNtalk: **understanding how what each of us does helps achieve the Vision and the Mission; believing that we can influence our work and how we do it; knowing that we will be respected for who we are.**

If you have questions, or want to talk to someone in the Ombuds Office, contact Faith or Jim at 919-265-0806 or ombuds@townofchapelhill.org

Compliments



Jessica Gentry (Transit) was commended by Jessica Mullenix for reacting quickly to avoid a collision with a cyclist.

Kelvin Harris (Parks and Recreation) was thanked by Steve Wells for noticing an unsafe condition during a performance at Festifall.

“I am impressed by employees of the Town of Chapel Hill every time I have the opportunity to work with them.”

Ben Smith (Transit) was thanked by Dena Ravenscraft for his kindness. “The T bus had just pulled away from the bus stop on MLK, when he saw her and stopped because he knew she wanted his bus.”

Lana Simons and **Ronald Stinnett** (both Transit) were complimented by a passenger for being polite, helpful, and very safe drivers. “I cannot say enough good things about them.”

Library staff were commended by Evelyn Ann Greene for being helpful. “Since getting a library card last year my experience with everyone there has been nothing but wonderful. Thanks!”

Parking Services staff were thanked by Dan and Flora MacLean for the first-time parking ticket forgiveness program. “What a nice gesture. We felt truly welcomed. We'll be back.”

Team Effort: Managing Halloween and Crowd Events

By Chief Chris Blue and Chief Dan Jones

Chapel Hill may be a small community, but we are often tasked with managing crowd events on a grand scale.

After UNC's Tar Heels NCAA victory win on April 6, 2009, Chapel Hill fans exploded joyfully out of restaurants and bars, dormitories and the Dean Smith Center. Ten minutes before the win,



Kim Ringeisen photo

Chapel Hill Police officers, with the assistance of Public Works officials, swiftly moved into action, closing downtown streets to vehicular traffic. As television choppers swirled overhead, students built small bonfires in the street. At the peak of the evening, the crowd was estimated at 35,000. This scene has been replayed many times during celebrations of UNC men's basketball major victories.

Another large crowd event that we're all familiar with is Halloween, which attracted as many as 80,000 people in

2007 before the Town launched a campaign to alter the size and character of the event. These efforts continue as we plan for Halloween 2012.

Such an enormous number of people confined in a congested half-mile stretch of Franklin Street present a number of public safety concerns. Officials worry about personal and property crime, crowd panic, alcohol poisoning and related injuries.

Key crowd management strategies we use include the following:

- Develop a detailed multi-agency plan and seek broad community involvement.
- Conduct an aggressive public information campaign, communicating with students, university leaders, merchants, downtown residents, and others. Utilize social media networks.
- Utilize unique safety preparation measures such as: grease light poles with vegetable spray (prevents climbing and paint from sticking); wet down streets and trash receptacles to assist safety and cleanup



Kim Ringeisen photo



Kim Ringeisen photo

efforts; empty newspaper racks; limit sales of light blue paint.

- Train police officers to be positive, stay calm and avoid negative encounters.
- Remove vehicles from event area. Place parking monitors in surrounding neighborhoods to discourage illegal parking.
- Implement traffic management plans.
- Monitor media reports and engage the media during the event.
- Signal when the party is over by sending in clean-up crews, sweepers and water trucks. Utilize UNC emergency contact system and public address systems to help guide or direct crowds.
- Measure success and lessons learned each time and adjust for future events.

To manage large crowd celebrations, the Town coordinates a workforce of up to 700 people, including law enforcement officers, fire and emergency medical service personnel, parking monitors, public works, and parks and recreation crew members.

Announcing...Nominees for the Cal Horton Award!

Congratulations to the nominees for the Cal Horton Service Award! This award recognizes distinguished service by Town of Chapel Hill employees with a monetary award. The committee has forwarded its recommendation to Town Manager Roger L. Stancil for approval.

The recipient will be announced at the Longevity Breakfast at Hargraves Center on Dec. 7. A ceremony to celebrate with friends and family will be held in December. Look for more information in the December TOWNtalk.

Charles Alston (Parking/BMD)

Amy Harvey (CaPA)

Judy Johnson (Planning)

Colleen Lanigan (Parks and Recreation)

Florentine Miller (Manager)

Kumar Neppalli (Traffic/Public Works)

Phil Williams (Fleet/Public Works)

