



# TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

March 2009  
Vol. 5, No. 7

[www.townofchapelhill.org](http://www.townofchapelhill.org)

## A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,  
Town Manager

The Town continues to take significant steps to respond to an estimated \$5.2 million general fund budget gap for next year.

In November 2008, the Town responded to the nation's dramatic economic downturn by instituting a Budget Savings Plan effective immediately for the current fiscal year. Our early action has placed the Town in a better position to deal with the current situation than many other cities. Our plan and other savings strategies include the following:

- Reduce expenditures for the current year by 5 percent or \$2.5 million
- Freeze hiring except when deemed necessary by Town Manager
- Freeze out of state or redundant travel and training, or by Town Manager approval
- Delay debt issuance (for example, delay construction of Library expansion project)
- Defer non-critical capital improvement projects
- Enter into fixed price contracts for portion of fuel needs

At the Council's Retreat, I presented budget strategies for next year that can allow us to survive the current crisis without layoffs and dramatic changes in service. The Council concurred with these strategies for the basis of the Recommended Budget I will present for consideration:

- Maintain employee salaries with no cost of living increases
- Maintain fund balance at 12 percent (minimum) and use excess for one-time costs
- Reduce the current tax rate to produce the same revenue as this year based on the new property values. (to assist property owners)

I encourage all employees to consider ways that their departments can save and conserve. Presentations about the budget and additional information are online at [www.townofchapelhill.org/budget](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/budget).

## Cal Horton Award Winner Larry Stroud

Public works employee Larry Stroud was selected as the first winner of the W. Calvin Horton Service Award for Town of Chapel Hill employees at an awards ceremony held March 6 at the Town Operations Center.

W. Calvin "Cal" Horton joined Town Manager Roger L. Stancil and members of the Senior Management Team to recognize the honoree. Stroud received an inscribed glass plaque and a \$1,500 cash stipend.

Stroud is a solid waste services supervisor who has been employed with the Town for 33 years. Well respected by Town employees who work with him, Stroud was nominated by co-workers who described him as "knowledgeable, helpful, patient and hardworking." He manages the employees who comb the early morning streets of Chapel Hill every Monday and Tuesday morning to collect garbage from residences. On Thursday and Friday, they're back out to pick up yard waste. These public servants are part of the public works team that provides and maintains the infrastructure and services that keep the Town running.

Stroud began working for the Town at the urging of his two older brothers, who both worked as collectors. Before becoming a supervisor, Stroud worked as a collector and a driver.

The W. Calvin Horton Service Award is one of the highest honors the Town of Chapel Hill bestows upon an employee. It is given to a Town employee who brings credit to the Town with

exceptional contributions to the community. The employee represents the ideals of public service to citizens and peers in everyday demeanor and actions.

Seven nominees for the award were submitted by Town employees this year. The selection was made by an employee committee comprising Loryn Clark, Dan Jones, Deborah Squires, John Newark, Lance Norris and Anita Hackney.

The W. Calvin Horton Service Award was initiated in 2006 when funds were raised by the community through the Foundation for a Sustainable Community Inc., a not-for-profit charitable corporation under the auspices of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. The community raised the funds to honor the 16 years of service of former Town Manager Cal Horton, who retired in 2006. The fund supports the cash stipend associated with this award.



Larry Stroud is congratulated by Town Manager Roger L. Stancil with Public Works Director Lance Norris, center.



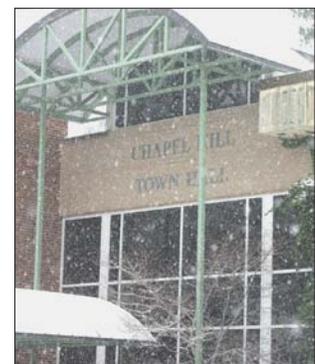
## COMING UP

**Saturday, March 21:** Children's Safety Fun Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mary Scroggs Elementary School, Southern Village

**Saturday, April 4:** Health on the Block, Hargraves Community Center and Egg Hunt Celebration, 9:30 a.m. to noon, New Hope Park (Highway 86 and New Hope Church Road)

**Friday, April 10:** Town Holiday

**Saturday, April 18:** Earth Action Day, Morehead Planetarium, 250 E. Franklin St.



Thank you to Town crews that responded to this month's ice, snow and slippery sidewalks!

# In Brief



Congratulations to **Greg Peeler** (Fire) and his wife Missy for the new addition

to their family. Aaron Peeler was born at 9:03 a.m. on Feb. 17. He weighed in at 6 lbs. 14 oz. Both Mom and baby are doing well. Pictured are Greg Peeler, son Matthew (left) holding newborn Aaron and daughter Anna Grace (right).



**Mike Mineer** (Police) and his wife Joyce are running to raise funds for cancer research.

They will run in the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Miler in Washington, D.C., on April 5, the Tar Heel 10 Miler in Chapel Hill on April 25 and the Flying Pig Half Marathon in Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 3.

**John Newark** (Public Works) has been appointed to the position of facilities management superintendent. He has served as interim facilities management superintendent since Sept. 28, 2007. His duties will include responsibility for program budgeting, personnel and overall maintenance management responsibility for all Town-owned buildings.

**SUBMIT YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS** to TOWNtalk! The next deadline is March 30 for the April issue, distributed on April 9 with the biweekly payroll. Call (919) 968-2743 or send submissions to [publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org).



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



The **Homestead Aquatic Center** at 300 Northern Park Drive was dedicated Feb. 13. The \$6.5 million state-of-the-art facility funded jointly by Chapel Hill and Orange County contains two pools, a larger "lap pool" for swimming team practices and lap swimmers, and a warm-water teaching "recreation pool" for families and non-competitive swimmers. The facility is open from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Saturdays and 12:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Information: (919) 968-2799 or [townofchapelhill.org/parks\\_&\\_rec/aquatics](http://townofchapelhill.org/parks_&_rec/aquatics)



The **Fire Department** puppet show visited the North Carolina General Assembly.

The musical fire safety education program, created in cooperation with the Chapel Hill Museum and the UNC Burn Center, was performed Feb. 25 for the North Carolina General Assembly in Raleigh at the invitation of State Representative Verla Insko. The event was attended by a number of legislators. In the photo, Firefighter **Patrick Spencer** brings star puppet Lt. Dan to life.

Are you wondering why your paycheck was larger last pay period? The new **Making Work Pay tax credit**, part of the new economic stimulus package, will allow for deductions of up to \$800 for workers whose annual salary is less than \$100,000. The IRS has issued new federal tax withholding tables that distribute that credit throughout the year rather than refunding the entire amount at the end of 2009. The new legislation will not affect 2008 tax returns. For more information, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and click on "Update on Stimulus Tax Provisions."

**The open enrollment schedule has changed** for two of the Town's voluntary benefit plans. Open enrollment period for voluntary benefit plans for supplemental life, accident,

cancer and specified events provided through AFLAC as well as short term disability provided through Symetra will be held this summer with an effective date of Sept. 1, 2009.

These plans will now have the same open enrollment and change period as our health and dental insurance. Having open enrollment for all four insurance plans at the same time will allow us to provide better benefit information and service to all Town employees.

**Health Insurance Changes:** Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) will discontinue the following discounts effective April 1:

- Cosmetic surgery
- Cosmetic dentistry
- Alternative medicine services, including acupuncture, fitness centers and athletic clubs, health spas, massage therapy, nutrition, personal trainers, tai chi and yoga

Discounts will still be available on chiropractic, vitamins and supplements, vision and LASIK, hearing aids, weight management and Blue365.

**The Flexible Spending Account deadline** is near! You still have until March 31, 2009, to submit claims for 2008 medical or dependent care expenses. Please contact your HRD Partner if you have questions.

**Learn how to protect your home** with a Foreclosure Prevention Workshop from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 28, at the Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road. The workshop is sponsored by the Orange County Affordable Housing Advisory Board. Register online at [www.nchousing.org](http://www.nchousing.org) or call (919) 827-4494.

TOWNtalk, a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees, is issued monthly September through June. It is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle with white paper.



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Town of Chapel Hill  
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
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[publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org) or (919) 968-2743

# Compliments



A citizen called to thank the front desk staff of the Planning Department, **Cathy Andrews** and **Renee Moye**, for providing good information and having a positive, helpful attitude.

**Peter Barkley** (Transit) received a compliment from James Leshner for his excellent driving and positive attitude. "He greets and says goodbye to each of his passengers and does an outstanding job each day!"

**Aaron Jacobs** (Transit) was commended by Drew Coleman for his skillful handling of a Transit bus in icy conditions. "I lived in the northeast most of my life before moving to Chapel Hill and that was as fine a piece of managing a bus on a bad road as I think I've ever seen."

Dan Gelinne emailed the Town to express his gratitude to **Stan Norwood** (Transit) for taking the time and trouble to help him retrieve a lost checkbook. "I think that my experience speaks to the quality of the transit service in this town, especially the drivers."

Orange County EMT Leon Herbert expressed his appreciation for assistance with a fire and cardiac arrest provided by **Darryl Russell**, **Brian Parker** and **Michael Sasser** (Fire). "They are a credit to the county."

**Steve Spade** and the Transit Department were complimented by Gary Park for keeping the buses running during snowy conditions. "UNC Hospitals' employees depend on bus service for their commute and our staffing was greatly assisted by continuously running buses."

Erica Jones thanked Town staff for assisting with the dedication of the Freedom Riders historical plaque at Franklin and Rosemary streets. "We thank you and your staff for all the professionalism you gave to make this event very special."

Greg Doyle thanked the **Communications and Public Affairs Department** for providing the weekly eNews update. "Thank you for practicing open government!!" To subscribe to eNews, email [publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org).

# Historical Marker Unveiled

National and local civil rights leaders unveiled a historic state highway marker at the corner of Rosemary and Columbia streets in Chapel Hill, Saturday, Feb. 28.

The marker commemorates one of the most important North Carolina civil rights protests before the sit-ins of 1960. The Journey of Reconciliation—dubbed the "First Freedom Ride"—consisted of an interracial group that committed itself to test a

U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1946 that ruled state Jim Crow laws on interstate buses and trains were unconstitutional.

In 1947, eight white and eight black travelers, led by the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation and CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality), prepared for a bus trip from Washington, D.C., to Louisville, Kentucky. Their arrival in Chapel Hill on April 12, 1947, was largely uneventful. That evening, they met with Rev. Charles Jones, a white Presbyterian minister long active in challenging Jim Crow, UNC students, and members of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen. When they departed Chapel Hill for Greensboro on April 13, the bus driver demanded that both white and black riders re-seat themselves according to Jim

Crow law and custom. When they refused, he summoned the police and had them arrested.

An angry mob of white cabdrivers attacked Jim Peck, another Freedom Rider. When Rev. Jones arrived at the bus station, he drove the men to his home. The cab drivers followed and threatened Rev. Jones, forcing him to drive the Freedom Riders to Durham and to evacuate his family from their home.



UNC students gathered to guard Rev.

Jones's home. These events precipitated an unprecedented debate on campus and in The Daily Tar Heel about police conduct, mob violence, and the institutions of Jim Crow.

Four of the Freedom Riders were charged in Chapel Hill. They appealed to the superior court judge in Hillsborough, who sentenced them to one month on the chain gang for both the white and black Freedom Riders.

The historical marker was made possible by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro chapter of the NAACP and the Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist, with support from the Town of Chapel Hill and the Justice in Action Committee.

# Recycling



Orange County will hold a compost bin sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 21, at the Eubanks Road Park and Ride Lot. The Norseman Earth Machine backyard composter, which usually retails for \$100, will be available for \$40. Also available are aerating tools for \$15 and kitchen countertop collection pails for \$7 while supplies last. Cash or checks will be accepted. The sale will take place rain or shine.

The Orange County Solid Waste Management Operations Center has moved to 1207 Eubanks Road, just west of the Orange County landfill on the south side of the road. All Solid Waste Administrative services, such as picking up new recycling bins and wheel kits, getting a landfill permit, and purchasing a hauler's license, will now be available under one roof, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number will remain the same: (919) 968-2788. Information: [www.co.orange.nc.us/recycling](http://www.co.orange.nc.us/recycling)

— Blair Pollock, Orange Community Recycling

# Wanted: Your Stories!

Town employees are invited to bring a piece of their Chapel Hill or Carrboro family history (a photo, a letter, etc.) to either of two community workshops being held by the "Our Stories, In Focus" community art and history project.

The workshops are being offered from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 21, at the University Mall, and from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 28, at the Century Center in Carrboro. At the workshops, you may also record an oral history, trace your family tree, or join in journal writing and story circle sessions with Debra Kaufman and Grey Brown.

For more information, call (919) 968-2749 or visit [www.chapelhillarts.org](http://www.chapelhillarts.org) (click programs and "Community Art Project.")



# Green Tips

Green Tips, a new *TOWNtalk* feature, provides information to help employees reduce energy use and protect the environment. Green Tips is produced by the Office of Sustainability, staffed by **John Richardson**, which has been established to address growing challenges associated with issues such as energy efficiency, environmental protection and social justice.

The Town actively pursues many sustainability initiatives, including carbon reduction, green building development, green municipal buildings, alternative transportation, green fleets, tree protection, energy bank, Active Living by Design, preserving open space, and the Sustainability Committee. To learn more about Chapel Hill's ongoing efforts toward sustainability, visit [www.townofchapelhill.org/greencity](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/greencity).

## Green Tips for Your Office

- **Bring your lunch to work.** By "brown-bagging it," you could save about \$20-30 per week. If your lunch is packed in reusable containers, you'll also minimize the amount of food packaging that goes into the landfill.
- **Be energy savvy.** By turning off your lights and shutting down your computer at the end of the day, Town employees will save on operating expenses and avoid unnecessary CO2 emissions. Today's computers are designed to handle thousands of shutdowns, so it's a myth that you will extend the useful life of your computer by leaving it on overnight.
- **Drink your coffee from a reusable mug.** Most coffee shops will fill

your order (and charge you less) if you ask them to use your personal mug. Reusable mugs also cut down on the office waste that is generated from one or more cups per day.

- **Walk or carpool to lunch.** If you didn't "brown-bag it," avoid CO2 emissions by walking or carpooling to a local restaurant for lunch.
- **Print double-sided copies.** By making double-sided copies, you'll save trees, cut down on office expenses and reduce the Town's carbon footprint.

## Green Tips for Your Home

- **Read your newspaper online.** Most local and national news is free online. If you have a hard time giving up the newspaper format, many newspapers now offer an electronic version of the daily paper at a much reduced cost. Reading online saves trees and reduces both your carbon footprint and the environmental impacts from paper production.
- **Pay your bills online.** By paying your bills online, you can save money on stamps and avoid late fees by paying your bills instantly. Paying bills online also saves trees and reduces both your carbon footprint and the environmental impacts from paper production.
- **Opt-out of your phonebook.** For many people, the internet has replaced the phonebook. And even if you are someone that still likes to use the phonebook, chances are you don't need to receive as many versions throughout the year as you currently do. If so, you can opt-out of your phonebook delivery or reduce the frequency of deliveries for the Yellow Pages by visiting [www.yellowpagesoptout.com](http://www.yellowpagesoptout.com)



or [www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org](http://www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org). Doing so will save trees and reduce both your carbon footprint and the environmental impacts from paper production.

- **Reduce your junk mail.** Millions of trees are used each year to produce catalogs and other junk mail. You can cancel specific catalogs by going to [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org). Cut down on fliers and unsolicited envelopes by calling 1-888-5OPTOUT.
- **Green your gifts.** Purchase cards and gift wrap made from recycled paper or send free e-cards online.
- **Donate or sell unwanted items.** Even though it might be easier to throw away that ugly lamp, chances are someone else might want it. You can donate unwanted items at a local charity thrift store (e.g., PTA Thrift Shop, Goodwill Industries, etc.) or sell items online at sites like [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) or [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org).
- **Bring reusable bags to the store.** Eliminate the need for plastic or paper bags by employing reusable bags for all of your shopping needs. Most people have old tote bags or other items that can serve this purpose. If you don't have anything lying around, most grocery stores now sell these reusable bags.



*Town Public Works crews (left) collect loose leaves to be used for compost or mulch. This reduces the amount of waste going into the landfill. Hybrid electric buses (right) use hybrid electric powered engines to reduce fuel consumption and help provide cleaner air. The Town greenways (above) comprise about 12 miles and open space totals 728 acres.*

