

# TOWNtalk

January 2005  
Vol. 1, No. 5



A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

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

## A Short Report

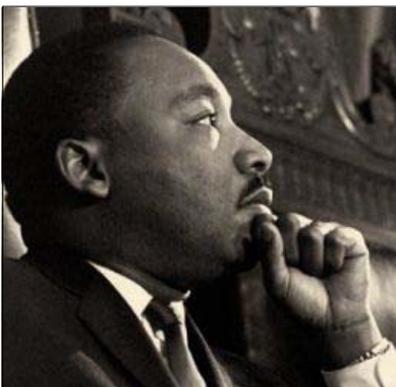


BY CAL HORTON, Town Manager

By the time this short report is published we may already have been visited by our first winter storm. It is the season for ice and snow.

I am proud to work with a group of public servants who always do such a good job of responding in bad weather. You keep bridges and roads passable. You remove trees from streets and snow from sidewalks. You fight fires in temperatures that turn water into a coating of ice on everything that's not burning. You help stranded motorists and protect people from harm in freezing rain. You open our library and community centers for use by citizens, giving some of them a place that is lighted and warm when their homes are not. You provide safe transit services in challenging conditions. You make emergency inspections of emergency repairs. And, you keep our regular services going as best you can, paying bills and giving information, repairing furnaces and replacing fixtures, and providing support for others.

While you're doing all of these good deeds, please be careful. We want *you* to be safe, too.



**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
TOWN HOLIDAY: JANUARY 17**

## Susanna Schmitt Williams

**Administrative  
Fire Officer**

**Joined Town:**  
January 2003

**Department:** Fire

**Duties:** Responsible for budget, payroll, records and data, purchasing, research, facilities and a number of other administrative functions.

**Personal:** After graduating cum laude from Temple University in 1998, Williams became an elementary school teacher in Burlington. But like her uncles and cousins, another career beckoned – firefighting. She pursued certifications in firefighting and emergency medicine on nights and weekends, earning status as a master firefighter. Her hobbies include piano (she once dreamed of becoming a classical pianist) and scrapbooking, and formerly, motorcycle riding. A Philadelphia

## In the Spotlight



native, Williams was enthusiastic about taking her husband, Clint, and their 17-month-old son, Caleb, to Philly to celebrate New Year's Day with the "Mummers," more than 12,000 marchers costumed in feathers, glitter, and sequins who strut in the oldest folk parade in the United States.

**Nomination Quote:** "Susanna brings abundant talent, intelligence and energy," said Fire Chief Dan Jones. "Her commitment and enthusiasm show every day. She will be a key part of moving the department into the future."

**"If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are."  
–Martin Luther King Jr.**

*(from Oct. 26, 1967, "What Is Your Life's Blueprint?")*

## Airport Road to become Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

In honor of a great American, the Town Council acted in December to change the name of Airport Road to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The street will have separate street signs underneath with the designation

"Historic Airport Road." The implementation is expected to occur by Independence Day 2005. The change will affect the mailing addresses of numerous Town departments.

# In Brief

## The Chapel Hill Housing

**Department** has earned status as a 2004 "high performer" from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. With an overall score of 95 percent, the Town achieved its superior score in an annual HUD assessment of U.S. public housing agencies. HUD evaluates agencies through its Public Housing Assessment System, a method of measuring the effectiveness of agencies nationwide. There are four components to the assessment — physical inspections, financial submissions, management operation certifications, and resident satisfaction surveys.

After finishing first in a regional competition, the Cheer America Varsity and Junior Varsity Cheerleading Squads from the **Hargraves Recreation Center** went on to compete in a Tri State Competition on Dec. 18 in Charlotte. The Junior Varsity Squad finished fourth out of 21 teams participating, and the Varsity Squad took first place. Members of the Junior Varsity squad include DeShauna Dudley, daughter of **Tracy Dudley** (Parking/Finance) and **Scott Blacknell** (Transportation) and Tiffany Hodges, granddaughter of the late **Lee Burgess** (Public Works).



**Peter Johnson** (Library), circulation supervisor, has received a Master of Library Science degree from NC Central University.

**Dan Jones**, chief of the Fire Department, was named a winner of the 2004 Goodmon Award on Dec. 13. Sponsored by Leadership Triangle, the award honors people and organizations who have exhibited

regional leadership. Jones shared the award with fire chiefs from Cary, Durham and Raleigh, as the award recognized their partnership to form and operate a regional Urban Search and Rescue Team, conduct Triangle-wide terrorism drills, and facilitate a successful grant for communications improvements.

The Public Works Department has selected **James Mansfield**, a groundskeeper II, as its Employee of the Month for November 2004. He was chosen for outstanding work performance.

Chapel Hill was named a Traffic Safety Community by AAA Carolinas. The award is based on crash statistics, number of law enforcement officers per capita, presence of a formal traffic safety program, and the existence of a traffic division. Chapel Hill is one of five cities with population greater than 30,000 that received the award. Pictured with the award at left are the members of the **Police Department's** Traffic Enforcement and Education Unit: Officer Donald Rhoads, Officer D. Cabe, Officer Stephen Seagroves, and Officer Claude Lyons.

**Sabrina Oliver** has been selected as Chapel Hill's new clerk. Oliver has spent the past 12 years as town clerk and zoning and subdivision coordinator for the Town of Elon, N.C. She will start in Chapel Hill on Jan. 10. A regional search was conducted to fill the position. Oliver's tenure



**LONGEVITY REWARDED** — Among those recognized at a special breakfast held on Dec. 3 at Hargraves Community Center to honor employees for their longtime service to the Town were (clockwise from upper row, left): **Billy McAuley** (Public Works), 32 years; **Nate Davis** (Parks and Recreation), 31 years; **Flora Parrish** (Police), 35 years; **Janice Dareff** (Library), 30 years; and **Dayle Gibson** (Public Works), 32 years.

with Elon involved her in tasks similar to those that she will undertake in Chapel Hill, including preparing Council agenda packets, drafting resolutions for Council action, keeping complete accounts of all proceedings and acting as the Town's records manager.

**Robert Reynolds** (Police, Technical Services) defeated the security on the Windows 2000 server and captured a file in a little more than 30 minutes, winning the Hacker's Challenge competition held in November by the Eastern Carolina Chapter of the InfraGard. Participants used their laptops to attempt to hack into either of two networked servers set up by the challenge coordinators. The object was to bypass the computer's security, remove a particular file from the networked computers and transfer it to your own laptop. Participants ranged from FBI agents to private network security consultants. InfraGard is an association of businesses, academic institutions, and law enforcement agencies dedicated to sharing information and intelligence to prevent hostile acts against the United States.



**Editing and Layout:** Catherine Lazorko  
**Proofreaders:** Carol Abernethy and Ted Hobgood  
**Contact:** clazorko@townofchapelhill.org  
 919/968-2893

**TOWNtalk** is a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees. It is published monthly September through June on recycled paper (100 percent post-consumer fiber).

**Published by:**  
 Town of Chapel Hill  
 306 N. Columbia St.  
 Chapel Hill, NC 27516

# Employee Forum



## Forum Elections Held

Elections held in November for Employee Forum representatives resulted in the following list of representatives, some of whom retained their positions. Officers will be selected at the next meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. on Jan. 13 at Fire Station 4, located at 1695 Airport Road.

## Who's Your Rep?

Administration - **Amy Harvey**  
 Engineering - **Deborah Squires**  
 Finance - **Kristi McClellan**  
 Fire - **Jonathan Bell, Norman Clark**  
 Housing - **Jacqueline Thompson**  
 Human Resources - **Wendy Walsh**  
 Info Technology - **Terry Gearhart**  
 Inspections - **Chelsea Laws**  
 Library - **Dorice Johnson**  
 Parks and Recreation - **Wes Tilghman**  
 Police - **Donnie Rhoads, Christopher Blue, Willie Quick**  
 Public Works - **Jerry Neville, Maggie Burnett, Travel Watkins**  
 Transportation - **Lee Harris, Ann Brown, Charles Bynum, Ceberettia Hinton**

## Computer Lottery Winners

A computer loan program offered by the IT Department and organized by the Employee Forum permits employees to borrow Dell GX200 computers for one year. Employees who won the drawing for 2005 computers are the following:

**Latanya Moore** (Transportation)  
**Andrew Bowden** (Housing)  
**Aris Jones** (Housing)  
**Melvin Smith** (Police)  
**Victor Owens** (Transportation)  
**Amy Harvey** (Clerk)  
**Deborah Squires** (Engineering)  
**Vanessa Sanders** (Finance)  
**Yvonne Brown** (Parking)  
**Robin Clark** (Police)

# Chapel Hill Transit receives \$2M grant

U.S. Rep. David Price (pictured, at right) last month announced \$2 million in federal funding to help refurbish buses in Chapel Hill.

Price, who helped write the funding for the project in the 2005 omnibus appropriations bill, made the announcement at the maintenance bay at Chapel Hill Transit.

Thirteen of the 83 buses from the fleet will be stripped and overhauled, eight of them with the funding Price secured. The rehabilitation will make them nearly like new – and more importantly, back on the road to handle ever-increasing ridership in this busy college town, where the transit system went fare-free three years ago. Ridership jumped 42 percent from 2001 to 2002, and 14 percent from 2002 to 2003.

Chapel Hill buses handle about 5 million riders a year, and the Town provides transit services to Carrboro and the University of North Carolina, transit system partners sharing in the cost of the service.

The older buses in the Chapel Hill Transit fleet are Nova buses. With their steel frames and workmanship, they are considered some of the best-manufactured buses in the industry.



These older models will be stripped to their frames and rebuilt, complete with new engines, passenger bays, wheelchair lifts, bicycle racks and other modern features.

New buses have a service life of 10-12 years and 500,000 miles, and refurbished buses have nearly equivalent lifetimes. However, the refurbished buses will cost only \$196,000, compared to the \$300,000 cost of new buses.

“Improvements to the bus fleet will help us continue to provide excellent service to a community that values public transportation,” said Chapel Hill Town Manager Cal Horton. “We are grateful for funding that will pay for refurbishing our old buses, each one of which takes as many as 50 cars off our town streets when fully loaded with passengers.”

## Joyce sends thanks



*To my friends and co-workers, How can I ever thank you all for the many gifts you've given me? I've already*

*had the pleasure of rocking Zora to sleep and reading to Rocky in my new rocker, and watching a movie on the way to Raleigh on my DVD player. Next, I plan to visit the mall with my “mall money!”*

*I want to thank you all for the gift of your friendship. I truly feel as if you guys are my family. Although I'll still be around, it will not be the same. I will miss the day-to-day interaction with everyone.*

—Joyce Smith, Retired Town Clerk

# Recycling

## News & Notes from Orange County Recycling

If you feel you are already recycling all you can, pick up an extra aluminum can or two each week outside your home. If everyone in Orange County decided to pick up only two cans per week, we would recycle more than 12 million more cans a year.

Is the disposable lifestyle getting you down in the dumps? Battery rechargers are a great way to stop the long-term expense and limited lifetime of disposables. Batteries of all types can be recycled at any of six solid waste convenience centers located throughout the county. For locations, visit [www.co.orange.nc.us/recycling](http://www.co.orange.nc.us/recycling).

# Compliments

## Praise from Citizens



**Tim Auble** (Transportation) received high praise from Rosemarie Sweet and Jeremei Banks in their Aug. 7 e-mail: "He makes the trip on the bus fun and does not allow any kind of trouble to occur."

There is a certain pleasure in being greeted first thing in the morning by bus driver **Paul Azzu** (Transportation), wrote Margaret Tapp in a Dec. 6 letter of appreciation. "He is exceptionally courteous and personable," she wrote. Another passenger, Kristy Gonzalez, also noted his warm demeanor in a Sept. 16 letter: "He is always pleasant to all passengers and attempts to accommodate as many passengers as is safely possible when the buses are especially full. His friendly smile and excellent driving skills make him a stellar employee of your organization."

**Jerrie Cole** (Police) was called a "miracle worker" in a Dec. 10 e-mail from a grateful citizen who thanked Cole for helping her family through a personal ordeal. "She was very professional and at the same time so caring and comforting," the writer stated.

**Dana Richardson, Sgt. Milton Durham and Officer Celisa Wilson** (Police) were described as "calm, respectful and professional" in their interaction with a psychiatric patient. Social worker Jenny Edwards of the UNC School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry wrote in a Nov. 2 letter: "I have been consistently impressed by the willingness of your department to assist us in the community. The presence of a police crisis unit provides a layer of flexibility and community support Chapel Hill can be proud of. Furthermore, I am repeatedly struck by the patience, compassion and composure of your officers as they interact with our patients, especially in light of how stressful those interactions can be."

**Employees of the Chapel Hill Fire Department** were thanked in a Dec. 12 letter for checking smoke alarms at a resident's home. "Thought I'd let you know what a big help they were!" wrote Rose Monahan.

**William Evans** (Transportation) was praised for working beyond the call of duty following a vandalism incident in a Park and Ride lot. Ada Rey wrote on Oct. 26: "He took action and was restoring access to the spaces by cleaning up the broken glass himself. Now, that is a good manager; someone who steps up to bat in time of low resources."

**Sam Jackson and Ann Brown** (Transportation) received kudos on Oct. 28 from Vickie O'Neal, who said they make her EZ Rider trips more accommodating through their care and attention. Another EZ Rider employee, **Laurie Mitchell**, was commended by Cheryl Lefwins on Oct. 14 for her patience and willingness to explain services to her.

**Larry Jones** (Transportation) demonstrated genuine concern for the last passenger on the HU express bus when he stopped as close as he could to her car and waited and watched until she was safe inside before continuing on his route. "I don't feel that the park and ride lot is necessarily unsafe, but at night, being alone in the lot, I greatly appreciated his thoughtfulness," wrote Emily Sickbert-Bennett on Oct. 29.

**Annie Matthews and Beverly Fearington** (Transportation) were commended for their service and kindness in an Oct. 25 note from a passenger of the NU and G bus routes.

**Teresa Oliver** (Transportation) was thanked for her careful driving on the S route by passenger Carolyn Shomaker in a Nov. 5 e-mail.



## Welcome new employees!

**Ronnie Harris** (Fire), Master Firefighter  
**Susan Burke** (Engineering), Assistant Stormwater Management Engineer  
**William Letteri** (Public Works), Public Works Director  
**Rae Buckley** (Planning), Community Development Technician  
**Phillip Jones** (Public Works), Construction Worker III



## Facts, figures and trivia

# Who Knew?



Several readers correctly identified last month's baby face, **Jeannette Fort Taylor** (Engineering), administrative assistant. Born and raised in New Jersey, she aspired to be a professional dancer and once danced on the steel pier in Atlantic City, N.J. She loves animals, the beach and nature — as well as dancing classes and body building. She has three grown children and seven grandchildren.

The list of baby face guessers is a mile long, and those who answered correctly are **Trisha Seidel** (Finance), **Johnny Parker** (Fire), **Kathy Thompson** (Library), **Toni Pendergraph** (Attorney), **Flora Parrish** (Police), **Kay McDaniel** (Public Works), **Trisha Seidel** (Finance), **Cal Horton** (Manager), **Diana Harris** (Fire) and **Karen Patillo** (Public Works). Thanks for playing!

## Who is Santa Claus *really*?

Santa came to Town Hall last month. Does he have a separate identity as a Town employee? Clues are that he:

1. Is gracious.
2. Likes hugging.
3. Is renowned for a generous spirit.
4. Loves hot food.
5. Can often be heard exclaiming, "To da moon!"

Send your guesses to Catherine Lazorko at [clazorko@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:clazorko@townofchapelhill.org) or 968-2893.

