

TOWNtalk

February 2005
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A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report



BY CAL HORTON, Town Manager

The Council already has begun the difficult work of developing a budget for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, 2005. All budgets bring challenges. This one is going to be especially hard.

Making debt payments, maintaining present services, continuing a reasonable capital improvements program, and keeping employee compensation competitive would require about \$5 million in new revenues, equivalent to about 10 cents on the tax rate. I believe it is unlikely that the Council will conclude that such an increase is reasonable.

The Council will need our help in identifying potential service changes, cost reductions, efficiency improvements, and revenue increases that could reduce the gap between revenues and costs. All ideas are welcome and will be appreciated. You may forward your suggestions directly to the Council or through the manager's office or your department head.

The Council has engaged a consultant, Maximus Inc., to assist it in reviewing major program costs and revenues. The consultant will complete its work and make a final report to the Council by April 11, 2005. A group of seven citizens were appointed to work with the Council as a special budget review committee. Their work is scheduled to conclude on April 11.

I will keep you informed as work on the budget proceeds.

TIME FOR TAXES

W2s are on their way. Be sure to check for these in coming days.

Jason Greene

Maintenance Assistant

Joined Town:
2001

Department:
Parks and Recreation

Duties: Installing signs at playgrounds, assembling furniture, painting and setting up for Town fairs are a few of the tasks that keep Greene busy. He finds creative and inexpensive solutions to regular maintenance of the Community Center and Plant Road office building.

Personal: Before finding his niche at the Town, this native of Lenoir, N.C., held numerous jobs, including computer salesman, waiter, landscaper, factory worker and even a stint as a pirate. He hoisted sails and growled "Arrrh!" to tourists who paid for rides on the Jolly Rover, an 80-foot schooner docked at Georgetown, S.C. Greene met his sweetheart, Kim, when she was working as a pottery instructor at Lincoln Center. They married last June, and she now works as a children's arts instructor in Cary.

In the Spotlight



Philosophy: "I am the captain of my soul," says Greene, who wears the tattoo "Invictus" on his left arm for the poem so titled by William Ernest Henley.

Nomination Quote: "What I look for in employees who I believe will succeed in our department is what I call a 'roll-with-it' person," said Kathryn Spatz, director of Parks and Recreation. "Whether delighting our summer day camp youth dressed up as Bluebeard, converting a hollow shell into a welcoming office for interns, or solving Apple Chill traffic dilemmas, Jason is our go-to guy."



COMING UP

Summer Camp Walk-In Registration begins - Feb. 21
(check details at www.chapelhillparks.org)
Happy Valentine's Day! - Feb. 14

In Brief

Martha Adamo (Clerk's Office) nursed a finch that appeared by her car, apparently disoriented during last month's snow dusting. After warming inside for a few hours, it was released and flew away. Is it spring yet?



Tim Bethea and **Mike West** were selected as Public Works Employees of the Month for December. Bethea works in Field Operations, and West works in Landscape/Administration. They are recognized for outstanding performance.

Lisa Edwards (Police) graduated from Pfeiffer University with a master's degree in business administration in December 2004. She began the program in May 2003, after deciding to pursue her passion for numbers in the areas of budget, finance and accounting. "It was a very valuable experience, and I will use some of my learned skills within my position at the Police Department," Edwards said.

Congratulations to Public Works Fleet Manager **Brady Moore** who is among the slate of officers elected to lead the Equipment Services Division, North Carolina Chapter, American Public Works Association in 2005. Moore will serve as the vice president of the Equipment Services Division for calendar year 2005.



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Celebrating King's Legacy — *The Ebone Dancers performed at the Public Works Department's Seventh Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration on Jan. 14. The keynote speaker was Valerie Foushee (Police).*



Coco Hall

(Purchasing) has completed all requirements to become a Certified Local Government Purchasing Officer. Hall brings statewide

recognition to the Town of Chapel Hill with her achievement, as Chapel Hill becomes one of only 16 cities or towns in North Carolina to have a Certified Local Government Purchasing Officer administering their purchasing program. Hall will be presented with her certificate, pinned and recognized by her purchasing peers on March 11 at the Millennium Hotel in Durham.

Philip Hervey (Planning) presented "3D Computer Modeling and Photo-Simulation as Planning Tools" as part of a panel presentation at the 47th Annual North Carolina Planning Conference held Sept. 22-24 in Asheville. His presentation included a review of the use of computer modeling in the Downtown Economic Development Initiative project for Parking Lots 2 and 5 in Chapel Hill. **Chris Berndt** (Planning) served as panel moderator.

Billy McCauley (Public Works) received the Village Pride Award from WCHL radio for his more than 32 years of dedicated service to the community. McCauley retired last month. He worked in the Solid Waste Services Division, beginning as a collector and ending his career as a residential route driver.

Henry "Duke" Turrentine retired after 20 years of service as a bus driver for Chapel Hill Transit. Henry was a "WHEEL behind the wheel," one who enjoyed driving and his passengers. He plans to "see the countryside," visiting family and friends in other states, some of whom he met during his military days. "We will miss his hearty laughter and many stories of his extensive travel during his military days. Best wishes for a life full of fun while retired," wrote **Ceberettia Hinton**, on behalf of all Transportation employees.



"I solemnly swear . . ." *Sabrina Oliver was sworn in as the new Town Clerk on Jan. 10 by Mayor Kevin Foy. Holding the Bible is Oliver's mother, Imogene Mitchell.*

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Human Resources

Enrollment open for Voluntary Short Term Disability

Annual enrollment for Voluntary Short Term Disability will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 10, at Public Work's Sanitation Conference Room. Information and enrollment also will be offered from 9 a.m. to noon Friday, March 11, in the Human Resources Training Room of Town Hall.

Employees who are not currently enrolled will be required to complete a Proof of Health form. Employees whose salaries have increased may be able to increase their weekly benefit at this time. For more information, contact Human Resources at 968-2700.

Step It Up! Update

Employees participating in this Town-led health and wellness program should submit their summary sheet to their Healthy Balance Team leader by Feb. 24. The summary will cover the second quarter, Nov. 22 through Feb. 7.

Recycling

There are a few more recyclables in Town Hall's wastebaskets than two years ago.

Recent waste audits by Orange County Solid Waste Management show that the total amount of recyclables found in the Town's waste increased slightly to 33 percent compared to the 2002 baseline audit when 30 percent of waste was readily recyclable.

Of the buildings audited, five improved from 2002, while five regressed; one remained the same. Departments demonstrating improvements include Hargraves Community Center, Library, Parking Services, Police Department, and Town Hall (no separation was made among departments at Town Hall).

Materials accepted in the "office fiber" mix have been expanded to now include Goldenrod/manila envelopes, Post-It notes, envelopes with plastic windows and notepad backs, as well as colored office paper.

Call 968-2788 or email recycling@co.orange.nc.us with your comments.

In Detail

Name change considered for Town Hall

The Council is considering a proposal that Town Hall be renamed the Howard and Lillian Lee Municipal Building.

Howard Lee, former mayor of Chapel Hill, was the first black mayor elected in the South since reconstruction in a city with a predominantly white population. He was re-elected twice.

Lillian Lee spent almost her entire teaching career in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro School System. At her retirement she was Dean of Students at Chapel Hill High School. Mrs. Lee organized numerous voter registration drives and hundreds of high school students registered to vote at these events.



Fire Department receives grant

The Chapel Hill Fire Department has received a \$311,000 grant from the 2004 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Fire Chief Dan Jones said the grant will be used to improve 50-year-old radio technology and a system that is a patchwork of different frequencies. It will fund 49 radios, two mobile repeaters, a power booster to penetrate large buildings and a digital recorder.

"In a major emergency, units from the entire area need to be able to communicate to respond effectively," Chief Jones said. "This grant improves our daily service and response, while also preparing for major emergencies when we must communicate with other agencies across the Triangle."

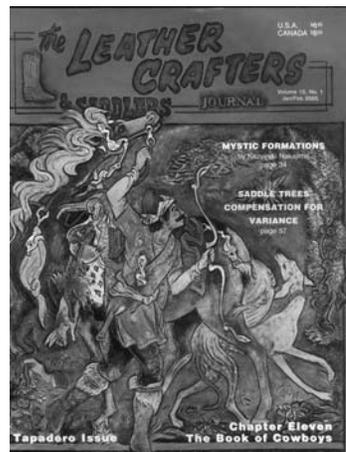
Stormwater Program to host pollution prevention workshop

The Town's Stormwater Management Program and UNC's Environmental Resource Program will host a free workshop titled "Backyard Pollution Prevention" from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at the Chapel Hill Public Library.

Topics include assessing your yard for pollution sources, practicing responsible home maintenance, and the use of native plants and rain gardens.

Funding for the workshop was provided by the Carolina Environmental Program and Progress Energy.

Register by Feb. 14 by contacting Diana Degen: 966-2463 or degen@email.unc.edu.



Magazine features employee's fine leatherwork

The colorful, hand-tooled leatherwork of M.C. Russell (Engineering) was featured on the cover of the January-February 2005 issue of *The Leather Crafters & Saddlers Journal*. Russell has a small shop in his home in Carrboro, where he continues the tradition of making custom leather goods. He follows in the tradition of his father, Charles Russell.

Compliments

Praise from Citizens



Officer **Josh Mecimore** (Police) received praise from a resident whose son was taken to the UNC Hospital Emergency Room and was required to be under police supervision. "He took the time to counsel my son, which made a real impact on him," stated a Jan. 7 letter. "It was invaluable to have such a nice officer take the time and effort to help my family during this time of crisis."

Larry Cates (Transportation) was described as a hard worker and simply "terrific" by Lynn Starr, a passenger on his bus route.

Van Bennett (Inspections) was thanked for taking personal time to complete an inspection in a Jan. 17 letter from Casey Lasek of the Resolute Building Co. "This effort on his part truly shows your team's commitment to aiding the builders of this community," Lasek wrote.

Paul Azzu (Transportation) was complimented by a rider of the NS bus route in a Dec. 30 e-mail message. "It is a true joy to have such a professional and pleasant bus driver," wrote Diane Dorney.

Employee Forum



Forum Elections Held

The Employee Forum elected new officers on Jan. 13. They are **Will Quick** as chair, **Jackie Thompson** as vice-chair and **Wendy Walsh** as secretary/treasurer.

The computer lottery received a positive response, and the new computer winners are **Terry Battle**, **Andrew Bowden**, **Latanya Moore**, **Aris Jones**, **Melvin Smith**, **Victor Owens**, **Amy Harvey**, **Deborah Squires**, **Vanessa Sanders**, **Yvonne Brown** and **Robin Clark**.

Need help filing taxes?

The RSVP Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is ready with trained volunteers to help government employees prepare federal and state taxes and related forms.

The free tax service assists local government employees regardless of income. Extremely complex or lengthy tax situations may be referred. Others served by VITA volunteers are low- to middle-income clients (special assistance for the homebound elderly or disabled). VITA is provided as a benefit for government, but employees may feel free to share this information with family and friends that fit these very general income guidelines.

VITA is administered through the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) as part of the Orange County Department on Aging, the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the IRS.

For more information, call the number for the individual sites to make an appointment: Chapel Hill and Carrboro — 968-2070; Hillsborough — 245-2015; Pittsboro and Siler City — 542-4512.

Town recognized for budget presentation

The Town has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

The award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting. Guidelines are designed to assess how well an entity's budget serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and a communications device. Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in all four categories to receive the award.

When a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award is granted, a Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation is also presented to the individual or department designated as being primarily responsible for its having achieved the award. This has been presented to Finance Director **Kay Johnson**.

GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving 14,000 government finance professionals throughout North America.



Facts, figures and trivia

Who Knew?



In the last *Who Knew?* we asked for help identifying the employee who played Santa. Sources confirm it was **Kumar Neppalli** (Engineering), who has been with the Town for more than four years as traffic engineer.

In his leisure time, Neppalli plays video games with his son, Akhilesh, and helps with cleaning and household chores. While his son holds a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, and his wife, Manjula, holds a Red Belt, Neppalli says he wears the Plain Brown Leather Belt, and this keeps his pants up.

Neppalli's native city of Vizag located in southern India may soon become the site of India's first tsunami warning center. He was deeply relieved that relatives and friends there escaped harm in the earthquake and tsunami that struck in December.

WANTED for Who Knew? — Pictures of Town employees when they were infants or toddlers to be featured. Contact the editor at clazorko@townofchapelhill.org or 968-2893.



Welcome new employees!

Lawrence Melville (Parking Services), Parking Attendant

Jeffrey Freer (Transportation), Administrative Analyst

Sabrina Oliver (Clerk), Town Clerk