



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

April 2008
Vol. 4, No. 8

www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,
Town Manager

How do you use your personal time to make your community a better place? My guess is that most of you give generously of your time to your church, your child's school, a favorite charity or some other community organization. Thank you.



National Volunteer Week is April 27 through May 3. That is our time to honor you and all the others who volunteer their time and talents to make the world a better place.

Volunteers also make our jobs easier. Parks and Recreation would do a lot less without the scores of volunteer coaches. Neighborhood watch volunteers enhance community and neighborhood safety. No community agency could survive without volunteers.

If you have not volunteered lately, I urge to look around and find a place to serve. From a purely personal career advancement perspective, there is no better place to practice your organizational and leadership skills than in a volunteer position. Those positions give you an opportunity to stretch your skills.

And what better people to develop as friends than those who take time to make a difference in their community?

For those who volunteer – thank you. If you have not found your volunteer place yet, I encourage you to engage the world around you; volunteer your time and talents to make a difference; and find your self evolving into a different person because of that investment.

Brian Curran

At the height of public interest in the Eve Carson murder investigation, about nine satellite television news trucks parked outside the Chapel Hill Police Department, many of them staying for 24 hours a day over seven days. About 30 reporters from newspaper, radio and television outlets peppered Police Chief Brian Curran with questions.

Many who viewed the broadcasts in both local and national media agreed that Chief Curran handled the media superbly well. How did the 21-year veteran of the Police Department, appointed police chief less than seven months ago, do it? Respectfully.

He managed the frenzy with authority and composure. He also exhibited patience and sensitivity as he carefully listened to each reporter's question, repeated questions, and in some cases explained why he could not answer them. He never said "no comment" without explaining why he could not answer something, and in most cases he promised to update them as soon as he was able. He respected their role and reason for being there.

"We understood that the media were asking the same questions that the public wanted to know," Curran said. "We attempted to use them as a tool to put out the information that we wanted to get before the public such as the photographs of the suspects and the reward available."

This doesn't mean he was without surprises. A cameraman hiding behind a parked car jumped out to film police bringing a suspect into the station through a back door. Due to the demands from reporters on the police station bathrooms and its aging plumbing, the women's restroom soon went out of commis-

Value in the Spotlight

RESPECT

trustworthy • open • defender of individual rights • civil
customer-focused • decent • sensitive • sharing



Mary Powell photo

sion. And eventually the number of requests for one-on-one interviews, especially from national programs, became unmanageable.

Although the reporters are gone now, police work continues in the "case building stage," Curran said. Looking back, the community showed true unity and compassion as it came together in a difficult time for comfort and healing. This was made possible in part due to the confidence that we saw from Chief Curran and the entire police team. From your fellow employees, thanks for a job well done!

"I want to recognize the people who brought this case along to the point where arrests could be made," Curran said. "They all did an outstanding job."

COMING UP

April 11-12: Dixie Rock 19 Competition, Chapel Hill Community Center

April 24: Lunch and Learn: Eating and Exercising for a Healthier Me

April 26: Earth Action Day, Parking Deck Plaza

May 8: Lunch and Learn: Buying A Home

May 14: Public Forum on Town Budget, 7 p.m., Town Hall Council Chamber



Earth Action Day is Saturday, April 26.

In Brief



Congratulations to **Jim Bona** (Fire) and his wife Cheryl on their new addition, Callie Simone, born on March 22. She weighed in at 9 lbs. and was 21.5 inches long. Everyone is fine, but older brother Tyler is still trying to figure out who this other person is that Mom is now holding.



Congratulations to **Chris Farrell** (Fire) and his wife Corinne on the new addition to their family.

Henry was born on March 7 and weighed 8 lbs. 2 oz. Everyone is doing well, and Henry's older brother, James, is anxiously waiting for him to grow up to play.

Congratulations to **Greg Peeler** (Fire) and **Susanna Williams** (Fire) for passing their Fire Inspector Level I test with flying colors.



Rick Shreve (Finance) graduated from the 2007-2008 Municipal Administration Course of the

SMT Highlights

As part of the Town Manager's effort to better inform employees of the activities and discussions of the Senior Management Team, we are now featuring a new periodic column "SMT Highlights." Please contact your department's administrative team if you have additional questions about these discussion items.

- **Budget:** No new initiatives are expected to be recommended by the Manger due to the heavy debt burden of the Town. Any carryover funds from this year's budget are extremely important to assist next year's budget.
- **Higher Purchase Order Threshold:** Business Management Services (formerly, Finance) is considering a higher PO threshold of \$1,000. Because auditing standards have become more stringent, the change would grant more flexibility to departments while holding them to stricter accounting controls.
- **Eve Carson Case:** Chief Brian Curran and the Chapel Hill Police Department were commended for their handling of the Eve Carson.

UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government. The program in municipal administration covers North Carolina local government law, organization and management, finance and budgeting, employment law and administration, planning and regulation of development, and the delivery of city or county services.



The Town's first **Earth Action Day** will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 26, on the plaza on top of the James C. Wallace Parking Deck on Rosemary Street. This free event for the whole family will provide a fun-filled afternoon of learning about our planet and the human relationship with the environment through exhibits, demonstrations, puppet shows, musical and dance performances, and activities by and for all ages.

- **Frances Russell:** The newly hired assistant director of the Human Resources Development Department was introduced. Welcome Frances!
- **NeoGov Application System:** A presentation was made of the new automated system to streamline the hiring process from requisition to hire.
- **National Volunteer Week:** Celebrate your volunteers from May 27 to May 3.
- **Break-ins:** There has been a rash of burglaries around town. All Town employees, particularly those who are regularly "in the field" (bus drivers, solid waste workers, landscapers, etc.) are asked to be on the lookout for suspicious activity.
- **Newsletter Distribution:** Communications and Public Affairs provides the newsletters for pick-up along with paychecks from Town Hall. It is each department's responsibility to distribute the employee newsletter. If you are not receiving the correct amount, please let CaPA know by calling 969-5055.

Town employees and retirees are invited to the **2nd Annual Employee, Family and Friends Golf Tournament**. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. Saturday, May 10, at the Shamrock Country Club, 1722 Shamrock Drive in Burlington. The deadline for registration is May 5, and the registration fee is \$40 per entry. Information: 968-2787 ext. 211 or jpompey@townofchapelhill.org.



Celebrating an employee birthday? Be sure to send your photos to the newsletter!



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

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.



Published by:
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org or (919) 968-2743

Compliments



Allison Campbell wrote to thank **Vencelin Harris** (Fire) and Fire Station #1's crew for setting up a visit to the fire house. "...thanks for making my son's birthday so memorable for all of us."

Thanks to **Jeff Cabe, Dennis Jordan, Chip Aiken** and **James Spero** (Fire) for their quick and caring response to a home with a strong burning smell. They efficiently tracked down the problem and stayed with and comforted the resident until a representative from Public Housing arrived.

Tasha Harrington (Transit) was commended by EZ Rider passenger Vickie O'Neal for being very cordial, helpful and kind. "She works hard and is always polite."

Marvin McGee (Transit) was complimented by Vickie O'Neal for his outstanding work on EZ Rider. "He is eager to assist the passengers, a real giver and positive soul."

EZ Rider Passenger He Du thanked **Milton Fields** (Transit) for finding her wallet and returning it to her at home. She was very appreciative of him going out of his way and being so honest.

EZ Rider passenger Barbara Barnes wrote to thank **Henry Burnett** (Transit) for finding an address on a dark street with few house numbers. She thanks him for his exceptional work along with all the EZ Rider drivers, dispatchers, and reservationists for their compassion, and is grateful for the EZ Rider program.

Robert Bosworth thanked **Roger Mills** and **Peter Holz** (Parks and Recreation) for their extra effort in cleaning up after cutting down dead trees. "They were extremely professional and very pleasant."

Step 4 Your Health

Chapel Hill employees celebrated the completion of Phase II of the Wellness Program on March 20. The celebration at Hargraves Recreation Center was sponsored by Pfizer. Participants were treated to gifts, prizes and lunch from Chick-Fil-A.

The luncheon celebrated the culmination of two events: Crossing Carolina Challenge and Step 4 Your Health. In the Crossing Carolina Challenge, participants were challenged with completing 425 miles from Manteo to Asheville by performing any of the physical activities outlined in the program. One hundred and forty-nine participants signed up and 17 completed the challenge. Jim Hueguerich was given the grand prize for completing 1,282 miles of physical activity. Congratulations to Tom Bick, Jeanette Taylor, Susan Hutton, Charlie Pardo and Chris McClay, who were presented with the Mayor's Award certificate for completing over 700 miles. All participants that made it across North Carolina were entered into a drawing and names were selected to win prizes.



Thanks to the Crossing Carolina Captains – Loryn Clark, Robert Myers, Chris McClay, Kim Weaver, Karin Michel, Amy Harvey, Stan New-some, Erin Kawamata and Amy Oland — for their assistance in making this program a success. We would also like to thank Len Cone, Go! Chapel Hill and Evie Benson, Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA for their support and sponsorship.

Phase III of the Step 4 Your Health Wellness program began on March 31 and will end on June 2. All participants who signed up should have received their booklets. We are looking forward to having another exciting phase and lots of wellness successes!

Recycling



Three Shred-A-Thons offer the opportunity to securely recycle confidential paper.

- April 22 at University Mall
- May 3 at Eubanks Road Park and Ride Lot in Chapel Hill
- May 10 at Orange High School in Hillsborough

All events are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and are limited to Orange County residents. There is a 10 box limit.

Recycle mixed paper every day at the curb, at apartment complexes and at recycling drop-off sites.

There will be a composting demonstration at the Community Center (behind the Rose Garden) on Estes Drive from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on April 12. Residents can learn the basics of outdoor composting and indoor composting with worms. No registration is necessary. Call 968-2788 for more information. There will also be two composting demonstrations held as part of the Spring Garden Tour, 12:30 and 2 p.m. at the Belden Garden. Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 the day of the tour. For more information about the tour, call 962-0522 or visit www.chapelhillgardentour.net.

New Employees March 4-31, 2008

Lubomyra Sawczyn (Library): Librarian Supervisor
Erin Kawamata (Public Works): Administrative Clerk
Kayna Flowers (Library): Library Assistant
Cristobal Rosas (Public Works): Solid Waste Collector
Charles Savage (Transit): Service Attendant

Upcoming "Lunch & Learn" Programs

April 24: Eating and Exercising for a Healthier Me
 May 8: Buying a Home
 May 22: Taking My Medicine to Stay Healthy
 June 26: Controlling My Cholesterol

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS to TOWNtalk! The next deadline is April 28 for the May issue, distributed on May 9 with the biweekly payroll. Send submissions to publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org or call 968-2743.

Compliments to the Police Department

Commendations for Quick Handling of the Eve Carson Case

Many people complimented the police department for its quick and efficient handling of the Eve Carson case.

From David Creech to Kevin Gunter, Chris Blue and Lee Sparrow: "Dear Kevin, Chris, Lee and the entire Chapel Hill Police Department: From all of us at NC WANTED – BRAVO! You handled the madness today very well! We owe each of you a giant steak (or how about some Durham Bulls Tickets.)"

An anonymous man called to say he wanted to congratulate the men and women of the police department on the good work on the Eve Carson homicide case. He said a, "high-five to all!"

Tim G. Nelson said, "Thanks for everything and how helpful y'all have been both to we local guys and the network folks as well throughout. it's greatly, greatly appreciated."

Wallace McElwee of Garner wrote, "Thanks for all your hard work in the Eve Carson case."



Building a Safer Community

The Chapel Hill Police Department works closely with residents to make our community a caring, connected and safe place to live. As employees, you can help inform our citizens of ways to make things even better.

If you encounter residents who express to you that they are feeling unsafe, let them know that the Police Department conducts free security surveys of homes and businesses. For more information, residents can contact the Chapel Hill Police Department Community Services Unit at (919) 932-2929. Another resource for residents who are feeling unsafe or who need assistance is the Police Crisis

Intervention Unit: (919) 968-2806.

If residents want to get actively involved, you might tell them that Chapel Hill has about 40 Neighborhood Watch groups that encourage residents to report suspicious persons and activities in their neighborhoods. The program also trains citizens in securing property and safety awareness. To learn more, call (919) 932-2929.

Are you an employee who works in the field? Police Chief Brian Curran is calling on your help to be on the lookout for suspicious activity due to a rash of burglaries in recent weeks. If you need to make a report, please call 911.

K-9s Assist the Police Department

When Chapel Hill police get a call about a break-in, a fleeing suspect or any number of criminal activities, you may be surprised that one of the first members of the department on the scene is a dog.

"Our goal is to have a dog on every shift," says Officer Jim Orbich, the department's K-9 instructor. "If we have to call a handler at home and wait for a 20- to 30-minute response time, that's time dedicated to standby mode waiting for us to get there. By having a dog constantly available, you immediately save all of those extra manpower hours and your success rate is going to be a lot greater."

The K-9 unit, which began in 1990, has four dogs conditioned to recognize about a dozen Dutch commands, their native training language. While their main function is

tracking and narcotics detection, the dogs also perform an important role in schools and in the community.

"Everybody has dogs," says Lt. Troy Smith. "That's always an easy ice breaker. You just don't get the contact without the dog as you do with the dog because people will come over and ask about it. It's a great way to make community contacts."

Chapel Hill imports its dogs from overseas countries, like Czechoslovakia and Holland, after they are one year old. This way, explains Orbich, they have some training, but are still "green," and can be trained for the department's needs. The dogs cost about \$5,500 each, but because they're purchased with either drug forfeiture money or donations from the community, there's no burden on the taxpayer. A real win-win for the Town and the citizens!



Chapel Hill Police Department's K-9 instructor, **Jim Orbich**, with his dog, *Baila*

Reprinted with permission from AIM: The Monthly Financial Magazine for LCFCU Members, March 2008. Volume 6, Issue 5.