



# TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

March/April 2014  
Vol. 10, No. 7

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

## On the Front Burner



*Rog*

### Column from Town Manager Roger L. Stancil

A group of employees needs your input in thinking about employee compensation options for the Town of Chapel Hill's future.

This is the Compensation Task Force, representing all departments of the Town. Its stated purpose is to develop compensation options to move employees through the pay ranges that are sustainable, affordable and equitable; focuses on identified and prioritized needs; and values employee contributions.

The Task Force has prepared a survey and aims to receive 100 percent participation. This is your opportunity to influence how employees will be compensated in the future. The kind of organization we are seeking to create depends on your participation.

My key messages to you are this:

- Seek out your department representative. Make sure they communicate with you about the work of the Task Force and solicit your feedback. Share your ideas and concerns with them. This is an opportunity for a constructive dialogue as described in our Value of Communication.
- Fill out the survey when you receive it. Encourage those around you to fill one out too. This is consistent with our Value of Responsibility, demonstrating our consideration for the time and efforts of our fellow employees.

## Charles Mitchell

Town of Chapel Hill Public Works employee Charles Mitchell was nine miles from work during February's snowstorm when he was forced to leave his sidelined vehicle. Six hours later after helping to push stuck vehicles, assisting motorists and walking as snow continued to fall—Charles caught a ride with a friendly resident and arrived in time to begin his night shift. It was 6:30 p.m.

As a snow plow driver, Charles knows his job is important during a weather emergency. He drove his Public Works truck through the night—pushing snow and laying sand, salt, and deicer to clear the Town's streets. More than 12 hours later, his shift ended around 8 a.m. just as many people were waking up. For the remainder of the week, Charles and other public works employees worked around the clock clearing icy roadways and piles of snow.

Charles is no stranger to Chapel Hill snowstorms—he worked in 2002 and 2005 storms. Crews work different shifts around the clock, sometimes sleeping over at Public Works, to ensure safe roads for the community.

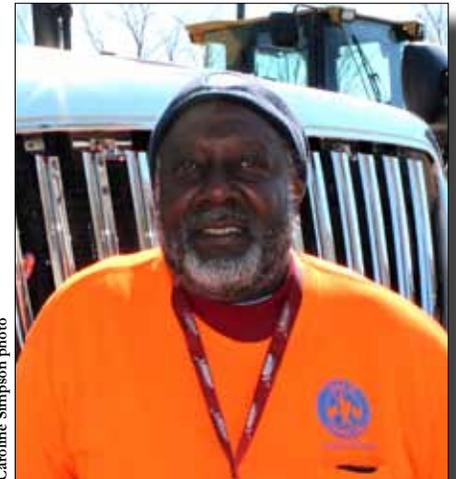
Drivers always work with a partner, and teamwork is essential. "Safety is always first," Charles says. "You watch for your truck and crew, and everything else. That's why teamwork is so important."

This year Charles and crew members started brining the roads about 12 hours before snow started to fall and worked diligently throughout the entire storm. He also applauds the Town's new brining process, which works to prevent snow and ice from bonding to the pavement.

Charles started serving the Town 28 years ago as a brick mason. Now as a construction Crew-leader Supervisor, he coordinates efforts and works to respond to service requests around Town.

## Value in the Spotlight

# Communication



Caroline Simpson photo

A North Carolina native, Charles grew up in Pittsboro. He is a member of the Mustang Club and sometimes shows his Mustang at shows and rodeos. He lives with his father, London Mitchell, and has two sisters, Laura Geddes and Darlene Mitchell.

"This level of dedication is appreciated and often demonstrated by Charles," Public Works Director Lance Norris said. "This level of commitment is exemplified by many of our Town employees who had personal challenges, including power outages or long commutes in less than desirable conditions. Our employees regularly make arrangements and sacrifices in order to report to work and fulfill their responsibility."

—Story by Caroline Simpson

## COMING UP

**Saturday, April 12:** UNC Science Expo, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Cameron Avenue, UNC Campus

**Friday, April 18:** Town Holiday

**Thursday, April 24:** Shred-A-Thon, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., University Mall Parking Lot

**Saturday, May 31:** Guardians of the Hill 5K, 8:30 a.m., Southern Community Park. Visit [www.sportoften.com](http://www.sportoften.com) to register.



Town communications recognized for excellence (see pg. 3).

# In Brief



Todd Jaeger (Fire) has been selected to fill the position of Chapel Hill Fire Marshal starting April 1. He served as the Fire Marshal for Reading, Penn., since 2005.



Congrats to **Pat Spencer** (Fire) and his wife Miranda on the birth of their

daughter Elodie Spencer, who was born on Dec. 19. She weighed 6 lbs. 4 oz. and was 19.5" long.

**Matt Sullivan** (Police) has been selected as Emergency Management Coordinator. His experience with the Town of Chapel Hill as a police officer, firefighter, crisis counselor and attorney establishes a solid foundation for his new role.

Congratulations to **TY Edwards, Shanika Nickerson** and **Richard "Rerun" Roberts** (all Transit) for completing the Transit Supervisor Certification Course offered by the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) at Chapel Hill Transit. Transit was pleased to be able to offer this national course. Thanks to the Fixed Route Operations staff that helped cover service while these supervisors were in class.



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

## Roдео Champions!

Congratulations to Javius Parker (Transit) who won third place in the 2014 NCPTA Bus Roдео, competing against the best bus operators from around the state. Four Chapel Hill Transit Operators qualified to participate in the State Transit Roдео by placing in the Regional Transit Bus Roдео, hosted by



The Town of Chapel Hill sent a **team from the Public Works Department** on March 19 to assist the City of High Point with cleanup after an ice storm earlier that month. The Town also sent chain saws, a rubber track excavator and trailer, two tandem dump trucks, a single axle dump truck and a crew cab truck.



*Storm cleanup crew Wayne Thompson (back); (middle row, L-R) Shelton Burnette, Audrey Gattis; (front (L-R) Rezell Alston, Warren Edwards and Charles Mitchell.*

### Need assistance with tax preparation?

The RSVP Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is underway at the Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Road, at the following times:

- 9 am to 3:30 p.m. Thursdays through April 10
- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. through April 11
- 9 a.m. to noon through April 12

VITA is a FREE tax service for clients of any age or NC county with low to moderate income who meet eligibility guidelines. Clients with returns that are lengthy or out of VITA scope may be referred to paid tax preparers. Information: [www.orangecountync.gov/aging/VITA.asp](http://www.orangecountync.gov/aging/VITA.asp)

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.



Chapel Hill Transit on March 9. This contest of skill for professional bus operators requires contestants to maneuver through a timed course, negotiating obstacles that simulate the challenges they face while driving a bus.

**Bus:** 1. Lafayette Poteat; 2. Ricky Hunter; 3. Javius Newman  
**Light Transit Vehicle:** 1. Tyffany Tapp

## Wellness@Work Updates

### Weight Watchers @ Work gets results!

In ten weeks, 35 people have lost a total of 310.4 pounds! For information on joining, contact Liska Lackey at the Wellness@Work Clinic at [llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796.

**Walking Groups March On!** Our current walking groups are:

**Hargraves/Northside area**, led by Sabrina Farrar and Faith Thompson at noon on Wednesdays and Thursdays, starting at Housing. Contact Sabrina Farrar at [sfarrar@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:sfarrar@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-969-4988.

**Campus/Downtown area**, led by Jim Huegerich and Kay Pearlstein, at noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting at Town Hall (2nd floor by the glass doors). Contact Kay Pearlstein at [kpearlstein@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:kpearlstein@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-968-2728.

**Bolin Creek Trail area**, led by Ed Brooks and Tracy Perry at 6:15 a.m. two times/week (days change weekly due to work schedule), starting at the rear lot of the Police Department. Contact Ed Brooks at [ebrooks@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:ebrooks@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-968-2760, ext 2729

Are you interested in starting a Walking Group in your area? We could especially use a Walking Group at TOC. Contact Liska Lackey at the clinic to find out more ([llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796).

Published by:  
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## Ask the Ombuds

### R.E.S.P.E.C.T. – What does it look like to you?

You are not only important to the Town, you are essential! You are the face of Town government.

This month's "Ask the Ombuds" focus is on **Communication**, defined: we take part in constructive dialogue and set clear goals and expectations so we may better understand our roles in the workplace. Our organizational values serve as a common language when discussing each other's decisions and actions.

According to this definition, **Communication** requires not only an environment where goals and expectations are clear (top down), but where all employees are invited to contribute to dialogue around how we do what we do.

For **Communication** to be safe and effective we have to have a common language based upon organizational RESPECT Values.

Employees define **Communication** using the words "clarity", "consistency" and "equity." Employees recount stories where it is difficult, sometimes impossible, for them to do their jobs, let alone see the value of their role in the town, when the "rules" – goals, expectations and roles are unclear, constantly changing, or some people are excluded, intentionally or unintentionally.

In a learning organization **Communication** is based upon the core assumptions: (1) each of us has some information while others have additional information; (2) each of us may see things that others do not; and (3) differences are opportunities for learning. **Communication** is based upon inquiry – the strategies of testing of assumptions and the sharing of all relevant information, with focuses on increased understanding and building trust.

**Communication** has been identified as central to reorganizational initiatives and several of the Workplace of the Future initiatives the town has been undergoing these past months – Employee Engagement Survey, EPMDs, Personnel Ordinance revision, and Comp and Class.

Employees have repeatedly made it clear that **Communication** is a necessary foundation in the workplace, and when the Town RESPECT Value of Communications is demonstrated, this is a place where they what to work.

### Jake Wicker Scholarship

Incoming freshmen at UNC-Chapel Hill whose parents are employed by a North Carolina city or county government office are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Applications are due by May 1. To request an application form, contact Torie Davis Forte at 919-962-2716 or torie\_forte@unc.edu.

## Compliments



**Scott Falise** (Police) was thanked by Selena Edwards for his quick response and follow-up when dealing with a traffic accident.

**Alonza Crisp** (Transit) was commended by Skyler Narotsky for being courteous, respectful, friendly and positive. "The diverse crowd that he drives daily all appreciate his caring, accepting, and respectful attitude."

Robert Anstatt commended **police officers** for being professional, organized, and efficient during an arrest. "I would just like to say that the officers did a fantastic job and seemed to be very professional throughout the duration of what I witnessed."

**Jaime Palacios** (Fire) was thanked by Ben Rothenberg for assisting him when his car got stuck. "He was super-helpful, gracious and kind. I just wanted to write a quick note to thank Mr. Palacios and to commend you on your awesome staff."

**Greg Ling, Jayson Staley and Gary Mitchell** (all Public Works) were thanked by Leanne Mikels for assisting the N.C. Department of Transportation in treating streets for black ice.

**Greg Alston** (Transit) was commended by Tung Nguyen for being punctual, professional courteous and caring. "He gets to know the passengers on his route and makes them feel welcome every time they step on the V."

### Transit Receives Safety Awards

Chapel Hill Transit has been selected to receive statewide safety awards from the North Carolina Public Transportation Association for fixed-route and demand-response XX. Congratulations to Division Managers Nick Pittman (Fixed Route) and Tyffany Neal (Demand Response) and to all Transit supervisors and operators who work hard every day in challenging operating conditions, to provide service to over 7 million customers in a safe manner. All your efforts are appreciated and your commitment to our customers and safety is fantastic.

**Kumar Neppalli** (Traffic Engineering) was thanked by Arthur Finn for responding promptly to a request for signs at the corner of Rosemary and Hillsborough streets.

**Larry Tucker** and **Jay Gibson** (both Engineering) were thanked by Ryan Downs for the Adverse Weather Map. "It's a unique and very useful tool to have for our town."

Margaret Champion thanked the **Police Department** for hosting "Coffee with a Cop."

**Kumar Neppalli** (Traffic Engineering) and **Phil Smith** (Police) were thanked by Carlos Lima for assisting with traffic and police coverage for an Ash Wednesday service at St. Thomas More Church.

Steven Fisher thanked the **Parking Division** for the courtesy ticket program. "What a nice surprise to see that you waive the fine for first-offenders like me. Thank you! PS: I'm not sure the Durham police would be so charitable ;-)"

Donna B. Rowe said, "Thanks to all of you for working so hard throughout this winter storm! Your dedication to providing email updates, courteous and safe bus transportation, and maintaining good roadways is to be commended!"

### Overheard on Twitter:

@buslady428: @chapelhillgov Big S/O to your road crews! Excellent work tonight on your roads! Driving was easy there. Kudos.

Tyler W. Fitzgerald @Fitzgerald\_Ty: The @chapelhillgov crews and this morning's extra @chtransit buses made for an easy drive and bus commute after that ice! Good work!

OCEmergency Services @ocncemergency: Great job on the roads!!! @CarrboroTownGov @chapelhillgov

### Town Communications Awarded

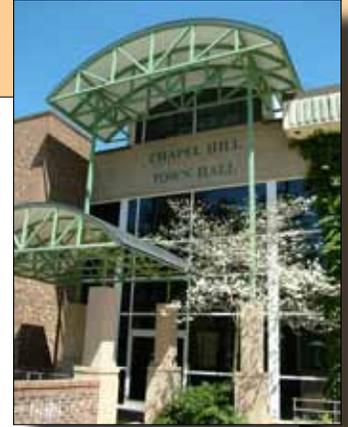
The Communications and Public Affairs Department (CaPA) was recognized for communications excellence by the NC City & County Communicators (NC3C) during its spring conference awards program on March 20 in Kitty Hawk, N.C. Chapel Hill won three statewide awards.

Judges recognized the entry Council Orientation Program for Most Creative with Least Dollars Spent category; the Mayors Innovation Conference Video ([vimeo.com/84253841](https://vimeo.com/84253841)) and the Report to the Community ([tinyurl.com/k632xy8](https://tinyurl.com/k632xy8)).

# Town Hall Renovation Update

The Town Hall Renovation Project will correct damage issues that occurred during flooding in summer 2013. Additional layout changes will improve customer services. The project is currently out to bid with a bid deadline of April 10. A refined project schedule will be developed and shared once a contractor has been selected. Thanks to all who provided input to improve Town Hall for both our customers and ourselves.

The renovation project focuses primarily on the first floor with changes to the Town Manager's wing of the second floor and the Engineering wing of the third floor. For a detailed overview, view the table below.



Area	Before	After	Goals	Schedule
Council Chamber	Flood damaged; entrance door at side of chamber, Dais seats 12, limited electrical outlets	Replace chairs, carpet, Dais; entrance door centered, Dais to seat 9, more flexible seating/podium/auditorium to serve various meeting types, improved electronics/AV	Provide a multi-purpose public meetings space; improve safety and accessibility; repair damage	May 1 (target start date) – 1st timing priority
1st Floor	Home to Revenue Collection Counter, offices of BM and TS	Home to the Permit Center (development services, cashiering, inspections) flexible workspace; small meeting rooms	To better serve the public by grouping most public services on a single level	May 1 (target start date) – 2nd timing priority
2nd Floor	Home to Manager, Mayor & Council, Attorney, CAPA, HRD,	Home to CAPA, HRD, BMD and a portion of TS (No major changes to the building's east wing)	To better serve employees and some public by grouping internal services	2nd timing priority
3rd Floor	Home to Engineering, Inspections, Planning	Home to Manager, Mayor & Council, Attorney, Planning (No major changes to the building's east wing)	Put offices with lower volume of foot-traffic on top floor; provide additional flexible meeting space	3rd timing priority
Public Space	Primarily located on 1st floor and 2nd floor	Primarily located on first floor	Maximize public space; provide additional accessibility	May 1 (target start date) – 1st and 2nd timing priority
Offices	Many single office styles	More open floor layout, workstations	Maximize space, increase collaboration	All phases
Conference Rooms	1st Floor, 2nd Floor, 3rd Floor and Planning Library	1st Floor, 2nd Floor, 3rd Floor and Planning Library; small meeting rooms on 1st and 3rd floor for staff in those work areas	Increase spaces for conferences and flexible work spaces	All phases
Bathrooms	1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor	1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor and new ADA Family bathrooms on each floor's east wing	Meet ADA requirements	May 1 (target start date) – 1st timing priority (lower level)
Employee Break Spaces	1st floor central break room, small kitchen areas	1st floor central break room, small kitchen areas with some reconfigurations	Provide areas that do not interfere with public use of the building	May 1 (target start date) – 1st timing priority for central space (linked to bathroom)
Storage	Individual storage spaces, common storage spaces located throughout	Individual storage will shrink somewhat, and common storage areas will be relocated	Provide all areas with adequate storage while encouraging a reduction in paper storage as appropriate	All phases
Mailroom	Located on 2nd floor	New location to be identified – potentially 1st floor	Provide a central mail area	At time of 2nd floor bathroom construction