



Take the  
TOWNtalk survey!  
See p. 3 for more.

APRIL 2017  
VOLUME 13 ISSUE 6

CHAPEL HILL  
**TOWNtalk**

On the  
**Front  
Burner**



*Town Manager's Message*



**Alex Terry**, Business Management; **Barry Lowry**, Public Works; **Barry McLamb**, Fire; **Catherine Lazorko**, Communications & Public Affairs; **Chris Blue**, Police; **Chris Jensen**, Public Works; **Daniel Dunn**, Technology Solutions; **Dave Almond**, Planning & Sustainability; **Jerry Neville**, Public Works; **Jim Huegerich**, Town Manager's Office; **John Brunner**, Parks & Recreation; **John Richardson**, Planning & Sustainability; **Meeghan Rosen**, Library; **Mila Vega**, Chapel Hill Transit; **Sarah Viñas**, Housing & Community; **Scott Clark**, Technology Solutions; **Stacey Graves**, Fire; **Susan Brown**, Library; and **Tom Clark**, HRD.

Do you know any of these people? They are part of a special group of people thinking about the future and how it affects us. On April 3, 2017, they met to

gather input, insights, and ideas for the next stages of our strategic planning for the Town. We are thinking about the trends that will shape our community and our services in the future. They will be looking at and identifying trends in the businesses we are in as well as trends in our community that will influence what we do and how we do it.

**Rae Buckley** will be overseeing our strategic planning process, that will guide our thinking about land use and future planning, use of technology and diversity and inclusion. **David Finley** will be leading our employee engagement in this process. Ask one of these 20 people how you can be a part of thinking about and planning for the future in Chapel Hill.

— Town Manager Roger Stancil

*Coming Up*

**Friday, April 14**

Town Holiday

**Tuesday, April 18**

Financial Peace University, 5:30 p.m.,  
Public Works (see p. 6)

**Saturday, April 22**

UNC Science Expo, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.,  
Cameron Avenue  
Tar Heel 10 Miler and Fleet Feet 4  
Mile Run

**Wednesday, April 26**

Lunch and Learn: Mindfulness  
Techniques for Managing Stress,  
Noon, Aquatic Center. See p. 6

**Monday, May 29**

Town Holiday



Employees celebrated the appointment of Assistant Town Manager **Mary Jane Nirdlinger** (center) with sparkling cider, laughter and applause. Pouring cider is Alex Terry, left, and Ben Hitchings, right. Read about other recent promotions on p. 3.

## EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS

The Town of Chapel Hill was among 22 North Carolina local governments to earn recognition in the Tenth North Carolina City & County Communicators' (NC3C) Excellence in Communications Awards. The Town of Chapel Hill won two awards.

The awards were presented Thursday, April 6, 2017, at the NC3C's annual spring conference in Charlotte. The Town of Chapel Hill received first place award for the "TOWNtalk Employee Newsletter" in the category of Printed Employee Newsletters. The newsletter is designed to share a common attitude and core values that connect and motivate employees.

The Town also won the second place award for the best general use of social media. For that award, the judges commented that it was hard to award the number two spot for the exceptionally strong submission.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CELEBRATION



Representatives from Public Works, Transit, Police, Fire, the Manager's office, and CaPA were joined by outside agencies, N.C. Highway Patrol, UNC Department of Public Safety, and Orange County Emergency Management Services. Teamwork and Communication were key to a successful event.



Receiving the NC3C Awards were staff members from the Communications and Public Affairs Department – (left to right) Graphic Artist Melanie Miller, Communications Manager Catherine Lazorko and Communications Specialist Ran Northam.



An estimated crowd of 55,000 people rushed Franklin Street after the National Championship on April 3. There were 10 total injuries, including four burns. There were 42 injuries after the 2009 National Championship. Police officers, fire fighters, and EMS technicians from across the Triangle supported the efforts to keep our community safe.

## TRANSIT APPRECIATION

Transit celebrated Operator/Maintenance Appreciation March 13–17. Transit operators and maintenance team members received small tokens of appreciation.



**Brian Litchfield** says: "Team: I appreciate all our Operations & Maintenance teams do to keep us rolling - no one does it better! Proud to be part of the Chapel Hill Transit team, y'all rock! Thanks Anita (and everyone who assisted) for coordinating our Operator & Maintenance appreciation efforts - teamwork, professionalism, communication and customer service!"



**Sam Jackson**  
"I like making my customers happy. The better I make their day, the better my day goes."



**Tammy McNair**  
"I pride myself in being professional, pleasant and making sure the customer has a pleasant experience."



**Tommy Hall**  
"You never know what a person is going through, and simple smile or a hello might change their whole day."



# Briefs



**Chris Blue** (Police) has been appointed Police Chief and Executive Director for Community Safety. In addition to responsibility for Police and Parking, he will work with fellow department heads to focus on community priorities in a collaborative and innovative way.



**Christina Strauch** (CaPA) has completed the certification program of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) and has received the designation of certified municipal clerk.



**Faith Thompson** (Housing) has been appointed director of the Public Housing Program. She has served as Interim Director since May 2016.

Faith will work with staff, residents, and community partners to provide excellent public housing services.

**Mary Jane Nirdlinger** was appointed Assistant Manager, a position that is being filled after being vacant since 2011. Nirdlinger, who previously served as Executive Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainability, will focus on internal process improvement, operational effectiveness and accountability systems. Planning Director Ben Hitchings will continue to lead the Town's Planning and Development activities.



*Council members test out the new designer crosswalk (above) at Rosemary and Henderson streets. The colorful crosswalks are one of numerous community improvements intended to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety.*



**Catherine Lazorko** (CaPA) was elected President of the North Carolina City & County Communicators (NC3C) in April. The organization is dedicated to the

professional development and networking of local governmental communications professionals.

**The Chapel Hill Transit Demand Response Team** celebrated 225 accident-free days on March 7.

## TAKE THE TOWNTALK SURVEY!

How do you like the new TOWNtalk? Take the TOWNtalk survey ([www.townofchapelhill.org/towntalk](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/towntalk) or [surveymonkey.com/r/towntalksurvey](http://surveymonkey.com/r/towntalksurvey)). Survey results are used to give you more of what you want to see in your TOWNtalk!

We'll hold a drawing for a baseball cap or mug with the Town seal, so you could win! The survey will be open through Monday, May 8.



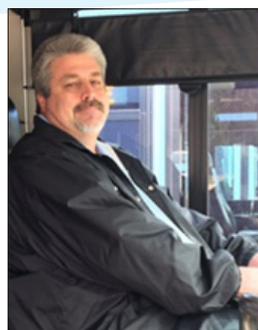
**Chris Blue**

"I'm glad to answer questions, read schedules, give directions, anything to be helpful to my customers."



**Michelle Sykes-Parker**

"Customers may not remember what you've said, but they will remember how you made them feel."



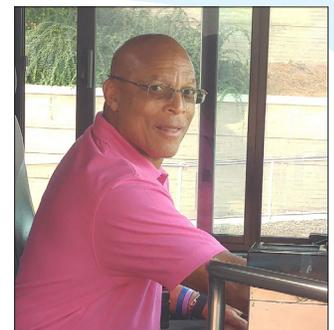
**Justin Graves**

"If one of my passengers looks like they're having a bad day, I take the time to make them smile."



**Fonda McCadden**

"I'm a compassionate person, and I try to let my customers feel that from me."



**Scott Blacknell**

"I speak to all my customers. I get them where they're going and have a good time doing it."

## WORKPLACE SAFETY COMMITTEE

The members of the Town's Workplace Safety Committee are primarily focused on the promotion and advancement of safe and healthful work environments and the wellbeing of all employees while they are at work. The Workplace Safety Committee is comprised of employees, supervisors and other leaders from various departments across the Town. This group of employees are dedicated to all of the Town's adopted core values, but specifically committed to SAFETY within the workplace. The committee and its members collaborate with other employees, supervisors and department leaders regarding occupational safety and health initiatives and defined workplace safety goals.

While many of the committee's activities are driven by regulatory health and safety directives, the committee specifically works to encourage and recognize individual and collective efforts in creating a strong and robust safety culture throughout the Town.

By establishing and implementing effective workplace safety programs and process at all departmental levels, this committee is able to assist each department or area in minimizing workplace safety hazards, risks, or unsafe work activities or practices.

With a strong emphasis on its established goals and objectives, this committee also attempts to support all Town departments while reviewing occupational safety and health programs, procedures, training and other specific safety requirements. As outlined within its charter, the Workplace Safety Committee provides a platform in which employees, at all



*Pictured (clockwise from bottom left): Zakia Alam (BMD), Wade Gullede (Occupational Health and Safety Officer), Sabrina Oliver (CaPA), Robert Minick (Parks and Recreation), Keith Porterfield (Fire), Deborah Squires (Planning and Sustainability), Janet Perry (HRD) and Ron Allen (Risk Manager). Not pictured: Brian Clossley (Library), Darrell Wall (Housing and Community), John Bjurman (Technology Solutions), Mark Lowry (Transit), Scott Taylor (Police), Tom Clark (HRD), Ken Pennoyer (BMD)*

departmental levels, can be directly involved in safety and positively contribute to employee health and safety outcomes within the workplace.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Workplace Safety Committee, please speak with your supervisor or contact Ron Allen at 969-5035.

SAFETY in the workplace should be everyone's priority.

## Ask the Ombuds

### Open2All!

Open2All! is phrase used to describe a place where ALL are invited and ALL are included and ALL have equal access to resources and opportunities to make connections and choices and be part of a community where creativity, collaboration, compassion and curiosity are embraced and where ALL thrive!

What does Open2All! mean for you? From the very beginning when asked what would make this a place where you wanted to work, where you felt valued, you said it was a place where there was clarity, consistency and equity for ALL in the workplace – a place that would be “open” to you and others equitably. You said that this means respect for who you are, inclusion in the team, and equal access to and opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

Hearing this, employees at all levels and from departments across the Town came together to begin to create a community Open2All! To accomplish this the Town has developed several tools beginning with our RESPECT Values as both the standard to achieve in all our relationships and the common language to use to reach that standard when we fall short – we all make mistakes,

and when we do it is essential that we learn from them and use our RESPECT Values as the common language to dialogue about how to ensure that each person is treated with the utmost respect. Can you imagine how healthy all our relationships in life would be if our RESPECT Values were both the standard to achieve and the common language to use to realign it when needed?

Our Employee Performance Management Development System is another tool in building a culture Open2All! - moving in the direction of employee development and enhanced opportunity while providing the opportunity for regular dialogue between employees and their supervisors. The Performance Log provides the opportunity to catch and celebrate what you are learning and what you are achieving. Every employee and their supervisor need to be taking advantage of this tool and to use it in their regular meetings to foster growth and development.

The Mutual Learning Model provides a futher tool for building an Open2All! culture through the sharing of all relevant information, explaining reasoning and intent, testing of assumptions and inferences, focusing on interests instead of positions, jointly designing next steps, and using a decision-making rule that generates investment and engagement.



The Ombuds Office is a resource that provides a place for us to be a part of helping build this culture Open2All! - through creating a safe place for telling our stories, understanding how what we do helps achieve our Vision and Mission, believing where, how and when we influence our work, and knowing that we will be respected for who we are.

This business of creating a culture of inclusion and equity, Open2All! - where ALL people are included and ALL people thrive, is a journey. As is true with all journeys, we have not yet arrived, nor have we gotten it right at every juncture. Yet we continue to strive to make this a place Open2All! and where ALL thrive! Every one of us is needed to partner together to ensure that we are ALL heading in the right direction and that ALL are included and thriving on this journey!

— Jim Huegerich, Ombuds

# Compliments

**Scott Blacknell** (Transit) was complimented by Bert Gurganus for alerting him to a blocked lane and allowing him to merge in front of the bus.

**Keith Smith, Hassan Olivo and Timothy Chaplin** (Public Works) were complimented by Alexis Poss for picking up litter that fell onto a street while they were emptying a waste bin into a truck.

**Hallie Bispo** (Transit) was commended by Adora Thayer for being positive and for dealing with an intoxicated passenger in a professional and pleasant manner.

**Jeff Alston and Shanika Nickerson** (both Transit) were thanked by Karen Meagher for handling a breakdown with humor and consideration for passengers. "We made it to campus for our 10 a.m. classes/meetings, with no problem. A great Chapel Hill Transit morning – safety and punctuality all at once!"

**The library** is a community treasure (James J. Bauer or Michelle Rodgeron). "How lucky we are to have you all!"

**Mark Geercken and Kara Bruno** (both Police) were commended by Miriam Fahrer for speaking to a meeting of Faith Connections on Mental Illness. "They answered questions with thoughtfulness and expertise and eased the minds of all present that everyone in a mental health crisis will be treated with dignity and respect in Chapel Hill."

**Michael Castro and Brad Meyers** (both Police) were commended by Cliff Meltzer for calmly and professionally dealing with a traffic accident.

**Jennifer Liles and Stephen Shaw** (both Police) were thanked by Karin Michel (Library) for giving a tour and info session to a girl scout troop. "They were both great, so patient with our group of kids, so willing to go above and beyond and show the girls around, and answer all their questions. I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the visit, and the friendly, welcoming attitude of both these police officers (and Jax the dog too!)."

**Marvin McGee and Tiffanie Tapp** (both Transit) were commended by Marie Rawlings Dagger for taking good care of passengers on the EZ Rider.

Molly de Marco tweeted "@chtransit NS bus #1310 operator made my morning by kneeling the bus for my bike & sharing why he loves being a bus operator." The operator was **Terrence Patterson** (Transit).

**Jennifer Liles and Mondrez Pamplin** (both Police) were commended by Ms. Edwards for being professional and kind in their interaction with her family.

**EZ Rider** has received more than 40 notes of appreciation!

"The EZ Rider operators are always polite and very helpful. I personally do not need help getting on or off, but I have witnessed many times the drivers always help the elderly, weak and carry their stuff for them. They are very attentive and accommodating even to the grouchy customers."

"Our drivers are very respectful, kind and helpful. I appreciate the way they are helpful when you have packages. I feel blessed and always feel safe."

"I want to thank you very much for your services. I'm grateful to get out when I have a doctor appointment. Your drivers are nice and helpful. Special thanks to Justin, Gerhard, and Tony."

## FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

The Fire Department and the Chapel Hill Firefighters' Association received a Special Recognition Award from the Jaycee Burn Center for their continued support of the Burn Center. The Firefighters' Association supports the Burn Center through fundraising, an annual softball tournament and a luncheon provided for Burn Center staff at Thanksgiving each year.



## TRAINING CORNER

Training opportunities this spring include:

- Managing Conflict with Customers and Coworkers, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Thursday, May 11
- Decision Making and Problem Solving, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Friday, June 16
- Time Management, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Wednesday, June 21

Sign up at <https://knowandgrow.csod.com> or send training request forms to [ramos@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:ramos@townofchapelhill.org).

Questions? Contact Tom Clark (HRD) at 969-5031 or [tclark2@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:tclark2@townofchapelhill.org) or visit [www.townofchapelhill.org/training](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/training)



A Lunch and Learn on **Mindfulness Techniques for Managing Stress** will be held at noon Wednesday, April 26 at the Homestead Aquatic Center. Learn how to identify stress triggers and use mindfulness practices to manage stress. Lunch will be provided. RVSP by 5 p.m. Monday, April 24, to Liska Lackey at [llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796.



Congratulations to Rah Rah Radishes, the winning team for the **Healthy Eating Challenge** in January! Members are **Ryan Chamberlain, Janice Dareff, Sarah Wagner, Amanda Gramley, Pat Heath, Karin Michel, Martha Waters** and **Beth Wright** (all Library). Top individual winners were **Martha Waters** (Library) and **Eva Cohn** (Transit), with 88 points each, the highest possible score. Thanks to everyone who participated! Look for the next challenge, coming in spring.



**Andy Colon: Motivated for better health**

Andy Colon (Public Works) decided to quit his tobacco addiction, and went all out to

create a healthier lifestyle. He changed the way he ate, exercised more and stopped smoking.

A friend told him about the Wellness@Work tobacco cessation program. Andy loved the idea of getting the support to quit, as well as the convenience of meeting at his workplace. The free medications and the incentive of \$100 for remaining tobacco free for six months encouraged him to reach his goal.

Six months later, Andy's asthma is under control, his energy level has increased and he is saving money. He also went from borderline diabetes and high blood pressure to normal. Becoming tobacco free, eating healthier and being physically active all contribute to the sense of health and well-being Andy now experiences.

If you are interested in becoming tobacco free, contact Barbara Silver: 984-974-8455; [barbara\\_silver@med.unc.edu](mailto:barbara_silver@med.unc.edu).

A five-week **Mindfulness Matters** series will begin on Thursday, May 4. Sessions will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Chapel Hill Public Library. The fee for the series is \$100. To register, contact Liska Lackey at [llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796.

**It's time to do the Health Risk Assessment (HRA)!** Make an appointment at [chapelhillwellnessatwork.org](http://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org) or walk in any time during scheduled HRA Clinics. Clinics will be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, April 18, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., Police
- Wednesday, April 19, 3 to 7 p.m., Clinic
- Thursday, April 20, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., Fire
- Monday, April 24, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., Clinic
- Tuesday, April 25, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., Library



**FINANCIAL PEACE**

**Terry Battle** (Parks and Recreation) will lead a Financial Peace University workshop at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 18, in the Public Works Large Conference Room. This program promotes and inspires fiscal responsibility, helping you to build a budget, set spending priorities, pay off debt, save for emergencies and expenses, and save for retirement. This workshop is endorsed by the Employee Forum. For more information, call 919-883-6153.

The Town has been named one of the **Best Workplaces for Commuters**. This designation recognizes employers that offer exceptional commuter benefits that result in a least 14 percent of their employees no longer driving alone to and from work. The Town offers carpooling incentives, free emergency ride home program, secure bike parking and bicycle benefits, and more. For information, contact Len Cone at 969-5065 or [lccone@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:lccone@townofchapelhill.org).

**THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL**  
BEST WORKPLACES FOR COMMUTERS  
- participating since 2006 -

**15.2%**  
OF EMPLOYEES USE

- walk
- bike
- transit

**700+**  
STAFF

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Editor: Catherine Lazorko  
Graphic Designer: Melanie Miller  
Staff Writer: Ran Northam

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.



# TOWNtalk Readership Survey

Your feedback about TOWNtalk, the employee newsletter, will help us make improvements to keep you engaged! Please complete this survey, available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/towntalksurvey> or via paper copy, by Monday, May 8. Paper copies of the survey should be returned via interoffice mail to the Communications and Public Affairs Department.

Would you like to contribute to the newsletter? We welcome your involvement. Reach us at [info@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:info@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-969-5055.

**Thank you for your feedback!**

1. Do you receive the newsletter regularly (on a monthly basis with the exception of July and August)?  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
2. How often do you read TOWNtalk?  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
3. How often do you see photos of someone you know in the newsletter?  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
4. Has your name been mentioned in the newsletter?  
 Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
5. In general, how would you rate the quality of the newsletter?  
 Excellent    Good    Needs Improvement    Poor
6. Which are you more likely to read:  
 An online newsletter that is sent via email  
 A printed newsletter that is delivered to your department
7. Your comments. How can we change the newsletter to better serve its readers?  
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8. Which of the following newsletter columns do you read?

- On the Front Burner, the Town Manager's Column  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Employee Spotlight  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Ask the Ombuds  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Announcements about benefits and employee programs  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Compliments  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Wellness @ Work  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Leaders Are Readers  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely

9. Rate your satisfaction with the following columns:

- Employee Spotlight  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Ask the Ombuds  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Compliments  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely
- Leaders Are Readers  
 Always    Regularly    Occasionally    Rarely

10. What information is most valuable to you as a Town of Chapel Hill employee?

- Messages from the Town Manager
- Report-outs from the Senior Leadership Team
- News from departments across the organization
- News from my own department
- Benefits information
- Internal job opportunities
- Training opportunities
- Information about work policies
- Announcements about special events
- Features and photos about employees
- Compliments to employees

11. How do you like to receive this information? (check all that apply)

- Employee newsletter
- Email blasts
- Bulletin boards
- Digital displays
- Intranet

**Complete the survey and win!**

We will hold a drawing for a baseball cap or mug with the Town seal. Please fill out the information below. We will remove this portion before tallying the survey responses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number or email \_\_\_\_\_

