



CHAPEL HILL Towntalk

SEPTEMBER 2020
VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1



On the Front Burner



Town Manager Maurice Jones

We are still in the midst of this global pandemic but we have a lot to be thankful for in the midst of all the pain in our society these days. Thanks to your efforts and the work of our Exposure Response Team (ERT), we have not had any transmissions of COVID-19 between employees. It pains me to think that any of our employees have gotten sick, but limiting the spread has been our fight all

along. And thankfully those who have tested positive have all recovered.

So, how are you doing? That's probably not something you are asked enough. It's important to take care of yourself mentally as well as physically, and we have resources available for both areas.

- Submit employee questions and concerns to the Office of Risk Management at 919-969-5035, rallen@townofchapelhill.org
- Contact the Town's Wellness Clinic: 919-968-2796, <https://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org>
 - Please call first
 - Please note: the Town's Wellness Clinic does not have the capability to test for coronavirus; the staff can recommend whether you should

seek additional medical guidance

- Your Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plan provides video diagnosis options. Visit <https://member.carefirst.com/members/health-wellness/video-visit.page>
- Contact the Ombuds at ombuds@townofchapelhill.org or 919-265-0806
- If you need to talk with someone about personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact your job performance, health, mental and emotional well-being, call 1-800-326-3864 or visit bhsonline.com

Thanks again for everything you do to continue to serve our residents during these exceptionally challenging times.



Check out this public art collaboration between Community Arts and Culture and Transit—a bus that celebrates Latinx pride by artist Georges Chevallier. Thanks to **Steve Wright** and **Melissa Bartoletta** (both Community Arts and Culture) for making this happen. We are also excited to share that we are in discussion with the NAACP youth council to do a similar bus, featuring their perspectives on racial and social justice. Get creative with the Latinx bus coloring page at <https://bit.ly/2Gr6w1T>.



BRINGING JOY TO CHAPEL HILL

Chapel Hill Community Arts & Culture is not letting a pandemic get them down. With a mission of “Inspiring Creativity and Celebrating Community for a Better Chapel Hill,” the Community Arts & Culture team has launched a wide variety of arts-based projects since March.

Created just a few years ago to advance community interests around creating a more vibrant and inclusive community, Community Arts & Culture tries to put Chapel Hill first in all they do. **Susan Brown** (Library/Community Arts & Culture), the division’s Executive Director, says that the team is committed to engaging and embracing the diversity that makes Chapel Hill such a great place to live, work, play, and visit. “We are committed to cultivating arts experiences that all in Chapel Hill can enjoy and that represent all that Chapel Hill is— past, present, and future.”

The division has three main areas of focus – Public Art, Arts Experiences, and Festivals & Special Events. While those last two have been severely dampened by the pandemic, public art is one area where the Community Arts & Culture team has been able to make some strides and bring some joy to the built environment around town.

To stay up-to-date with all things Chapel Hill Community Arts & Culture, follow on Facebook (facebook.com/CHCommunityArts), Instagram (instagram.com/chcommunityarts), and Twitter (twitter.com/CHCommunityArts). Sign up for monthly eNews (chapelhillarts.org/signup)



Downtown Window Art: To enliven downtown, Community Arts & Culture commissioned regional artists to create designs for windows along Franklin Street. More installations coming soon will highlight artists of color.



Bolin Creek Tunnel Murals: A collaboration with Parks & Recreation, new murals now adorn each side of the Bolin Creek Trail tunnel under MLK Jr. Blvd. Created by artist J Massullo, these feature local flora and fauna, but with a different artistic take. Massullo uses traditional graffiti spray paint techniques and stylized creatures to create a fun and funky tableau.

Art by Sampada Agarwal

Art by J Massullo

COMMUNITY APPRECIATION

In May, residents thanked the Solid Waste Services Division for going above and beyond to keep up with trash and yard waste collection during the pandemic.

University Baptist Church provided lunch for the Solid Waste Services Division. Division staff was genuinely appreciative of the homemade chicken gumbo that the church members made for them.

The Gimghoul Neighborhood provided lunch from 411 West to the Solid Waste Services Division. Division employees were extremely appreciative of this thoughtful and generous gesture.



Briefs



Ann Anderson was chosen as our new Town Attorney. She has a BA in history from UNC-Chapel Hill and a law degree from UNC School of Law. Ann was appointed

to the position that was vacated by retiring Attorney Ralph Karpinos, who served the Town since 1985, the longest serving full-time in-house municipal attorney in North Carolina.

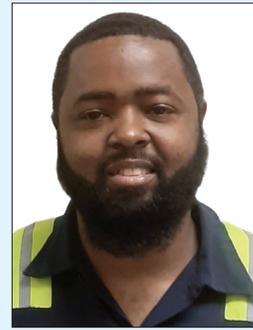
Anita Badrock (Ombuds) was chosen from among a diverse group of talented and qualified applicants to fill the Ombuds position after a national search. In addition to her responsibilities in helping you navigate employment with the Town, she will be providing support to Town Boards and Commissions.



Amanda Bender (Fire) is our new Emergency Management Planner. She has a B.S. in Emergency Administration

and Planning and a B.A. in Urban Policy and Planning from the University of North Texas. Amanda will be responsible for a wide range of initiatives, including developing and updating plans, preparing and reviewing emergency action plans for special events, and assisting Town departments with emergency and disaster plans.

Nigel Frank (Transit) has been promoted to Training and Safety Specialist. He has helped coordinate our new Operator training program on an interim basis over the past year. Nigel's primary responsibilities will include monitoring and inspecting safety performance; planning, organizing and leading a program for the instruction of Apprentice Fixed Route and Demand Response Operators and re-instruction of veteran transit operators; and reviewing accident/incident reports to help determine necessary training/re-training.



Eugene Harrison (Transit) has been promoted to Mechanic Supervisor. Eugene has worked for Transit for two years, serving as

Mechanic I and Fill-In Supervisor. He has 20 years of experience in diagnostics, repair and fleet maintenance.



Stacey Lassiter (Transit) has been promoted to Fixed Route Supervisor. Stacey will provide supervision, counseling and coaching to

transit operators, help customers and troubleshoot issues.

Stan Norwood (Transit) was featured as a Hometown Hero by Chapelboro.com. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3jIUvmw>. Stan has provided exceptional customer



service on Chapel Hill Transit buses for 32 years. He is known for his professionalism, commitment to safety, and willingness to help others.

Transit Director Brian Litchfield says, "Stan is a true ambassador for Chapel Hill Transit/Town of Chapel Hill and his positive impact on Transit and our customers cannot be calculated."

Stan regularly receives compliments from Transit customers, including Cassandra, who thanked him for helping her with bus routes and schedules and being very friendly.



COVID-19: A CAUTIONARY TALE

In late July, I contracted COVID-19. In fact, my whole family did, and I think it's important that everyone know what happened. Being that my family and I have been very vigilant in our protections, I want folks to know that you can't let down your guard. We got complacent and didn't do our due diligence.

Almost two weeks prior, my wife and I met with some friends that had been just as vigilant as we've been. They had been working from home and their child hadn't been in day care since March. Given their background, we didn't ask about their contacts over the previous days... Long story short, they were in contact with someone who tested positive and didn't tell them about the possibility of exposure until it was too late.

Ultimately, I share all this information to implore all of you, for the safety and health of our families, to be open about how you're feeling and ask questions, even of close friends. Your livelihood may depend on it. If we had continued to wear our masks around our friends, my family may not be sick right now. One person being open and honest, or at least had taken basic precautions, could have kept seven people from being sick. There may be more.

Now. How have we been doing? It wasn't fun. Luckily, no one went to the hospital. In the beginning I spent over 18 hours in bed in my CPAP unable to do anything. We quarantined and had to receive groceries and medicines from



neighbors, family, and delivery services. For us, it was very, very similar to the flu, and frankly it sucks. Two sick adults and two small kids that need care and attention is beyond difficult. My greatest concern is the growing research showing underlying vascular issues are possible.

Lastly, I'm asking, I'm begging you, take the basic precautions of distancing and wearing a face covering. Ask friends to do the same and make sure you know who you're around. This is very much real, so don't let your guard down!

Luckily, I was on leave, or I could've easily spread this to multiple firefighters. I don't know what I would do if I knew I had caused any one of you to become ill. I want you all to be as safe and healthy as possible, so please take my experience as a cautionary tale to look out for everyone in this vast family.

—David Sasser (Fire)

CHAPEL HILL CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE

The Town of Chapel Hill is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Throughout the month, Town departments will highlight a variety of local groups, artists, and past programs on social media to honor the contributions of Hispanic cultures in our community.

In addition to the local observances of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Town has many ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening our support of residents of Hispanic and Latinx origin, including:

- **Building Integrated Communities**, a partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill aimed at developing strategies to make the Town more welcoming and inclusive of immigrant and refugee residents.
- **Language Access Services**, providing interpretation and translation services for Spanish-speakers for public meetings, emergency communications, etc.
- **DACA Renewal Assistance Program**, providing financial assistance to community members who have received deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.
- **Police outreach to Hispanic/Latinx communities**

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed each year from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting date for Hispanic Heritage Month because of its significance in Latin American history; it is the date that five Latin American countries – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua – declared their independence, while Mexico declared its independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18. Learn more at hispanicheritagemoth.gov.



Compliments

Robert Whitaker (Housing) was commended by Faith Brodie (Housing) for being the epitome of Town values. He is an excellent worker and always has a smile. He drives from Moore County, and he's never late. He provides great customer service and helps to address fears and concerns of Public Housing residents. He volunteers for the Town food bank and with a group that helps seniors with household chores.

Steve Degraffenried (Parks and Recreation) was commended by Julia Anthenien for dealing politely and calmly with an aggressive person at the dog park.

Christopher Farrar, Rigoberto Rodriguez, and Calvin Farrington (all Public Works) were thanked by Tania Trembl for being efficient, courteous, and helpful.

Tyrone Williams, Chris Haug and Ray Gornto (all Traffic Engineering) were commended by Tim Czupka for being accomodating and helpful.

Angie Arrington (Public Works) was complimented by Michael Pooch for being extremely helpful and very prompt.

Terry Vance thanked **Kyle Stuart** (Police) for keeping her sister safe when a tree with live wires fell on her vehicle. Vance's sister suffers from memory issues and recently broke her arm.

Javius Newman and Monica Richard (both Transit) were commended by Paul H. Moss (Fire) for responding quickly and professionally to provide a cooling bus for residents evacuated due to a gas leak.

Nakeisha Guzman (Transit) did a great job working with a customer who was irate and aggressive during a march and rally.

Winston Clark thanked **Johnnie Britt** (Police) for helping artist Justin Liuba connect with Clark, owner of a watercolor Liuba painted. Liuba is 95 years old and preparing an exhibition of his work. Clark's parents purchased the watercolor from Liuba 68 years ago.

Fred Rogers (Stormwater) was commended by Marty Solomon for helping to quickly resolve an issue with a driveway. "He did a great job."

Wendy Simmons (Public Works) was commended by Rebecca Goz for responding promptly, communicating well, and resolving problems quickly.

Tracy Mabinton (Transit) was complimented by a Transit customer for being super friendly and very nice.

Ken Huff expressed appreciation for **Travis Alston** (Inspections), who went out of his way to help Ken secure a Certificate of Occupancy when there was a problem the day before a holiday.

Amy Edwards (Transit) was complimented by Cassandra for being friendly, caring, and helpful.

Marcus Campbell (Transit) was thanked by a Transit rider for being friendly and kind and having a good work ethic. "He is a great representative for CH Transit."

Kaila Vick (Transit) was commended by Keith Sikes and Aline Kala for helping them when they got on the wrong Tar Heel Transit bus.



Thanks to **Public Works** for coordinating with the NC Department of Transportation to make repairs at key transit stops on DOT roads during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reggie Mebane (Transit) was complimented by Yvonne for being nice, considerate, and welcoming, and was thanked by Amanda for having a great attitude and caring for passengers.

Michael Castro (Police) was thanked by Wade Gullede for doing a presentation on public safety.

Ronald Carnes (Transit) was complimented by Allison. "A bright spot in my morning - Mr. Ronald Carnes driving the @chtransit J route!"

Janae Davis (Transit) was commended by Summer for being a prompt and efficient driver.

Brian Wheeler (Police) was thanked by Jeff Hallen for assisting Hallen's wife when her car tire blew out.

Kumar Neppalli (Traffic Engineering) was thanked by Kevin Morin-Kensicki for a quick response to questions about traffic calming in neighborhoods around Wegmans.

PROVIDING EXCELLENT SERVICE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On Aug. 3, the Solid Waste Services Division didn't have enough staff for all seven residential trash collection routes. **Fred Rogers, C. Howard Baldwin, Rigoberto Rodriguez, Rodney Kornegay, Justin Allison, and Andy Summers** (all Public Works) demonstrated Teamwork, Professionalism, and Responsibility when they volunteered to collect the route

after they had completed their regular routes in the rain.

Jeffrey Owensby (Transit) was commended by Megan Bailey for making sure a passenger put on a mask. "He has always been friendly and accommodating."

Town garbage collectors were thanked by Julian Tamers for keeping the Town clean during the pandemic.

Brittany Johnson (Police) was commended by Cathy Boyd for doing a great job on the FEMA Tracking project team. "She is not afraid to ask questions or offer suggestions."

Gigi Taylor thanked **Chapel Hill Transit** for doing a great job. "I appreciate your thoughtful attention to the safety of your riders and your efforts to maintain service."



wellness @ work
 UNC HEALTH CARE | FAMILY MEDICINE
 TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Drive-through flu shot clinics

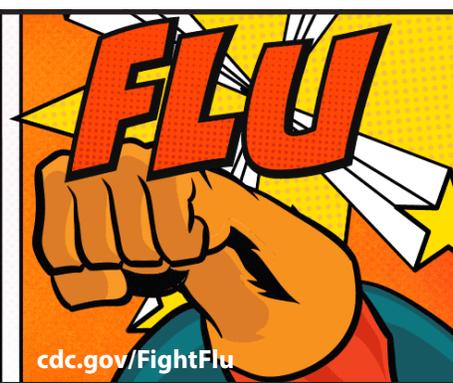
Protect yourself and others! It's not too early – a flu shot now will last through the entire flu season. It's easy – check in at the first tent and get your shot at one of the other two tents.

Flu shot clinics are open to all employees and pre-65 retirees. If you need shots for dependents under 6 years old, please call the clinic first.

- Thursday, Oct 8, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., Homestead Aquatic Center Lot
- Thursday, Oct 15, 2–5 p.m., Homestead Aquatic Center Lot

For dates of upcoming flu shot clinics, visit chapelhillwellnessatwork.org

FLU FACT
 Even **healthy** people can get the flu. Protect yourself. Get a flu shot.
 #FIGHT FLU



Work Your Weigh to Wellness

Work Your Weigh to Wellness has begun! This free 12-week weight loss program uses a non-diet approach to help you reach your wellness goals.

Classes will meet on Webex from 12:15–1 p.m. Wednesdays from Sept. 23 to Dec. 16.

You'll get education on essential nutrition topics, skill development, and group support.

The program instructor is Lana Nasrallah, Wellness@Work Dietitian/Nutritionist.

To sign up, contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

Living Healthy Class starts Oct. 27!

Do you, or does someone in your life, have one or more chronic health conditions? Living Healthy lets participants take control of their health, while connecting with others dealing with similar issues.

Participants will learn techniques for dealing with problems, tips for healthy eating and exercise, how to make informed treatment decisions, and more.

The free class meets on Zoom from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 27 through Tuesday, Dec. 7. It is open to all Town employees, families, and pre-65 retirees. Interested? Contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

O2 FITNESS IS OPEN

O2 Fitness is open for business, and membership dues will resume with the Oct. 9 paycheck. If you wish to cancel your membership, email **Tom Clark** (HRD) at tclark2@townofchapelhill.org.

Permanent employees who have completed the HRA can join O2 Fitness for \$5 per month. Family members over the age of 12, partners, part-time employees and employees who have not completed the HRA (including all employees who are eligible to join BCBSNC) are eligible to join for \$10 per month.

Membership includes access to all O2 Fitness locations, free classes (except the BOOTCAMP class), and three sessions with a personal trainer.

Questions? email **Tom Clark** (HRD) at tclark2@townofchapelhill.org.

EVERYONE COUNTS! 
 IN ORANGE COUNTY
CENSUS 2020

HAVE YOU DONE THE CENSUS?

Everyone counts! It's easy – you can do the census online at 2020census.gov. Much of the funding that comes from the Census helps the most vulnerable among us. It provides health care, education, food and nutrition programs, housing and child care for families.

The data collected by the Census determines the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and influence in the Electoral College; informs redistricting, defining congressional and state legislative districts; and directs more than \$675 billion in federal funding to states and cities.

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