



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

June 2010
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www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,
Town Manager

Everyone at the Town works hard, especially in these times. Enjoy the summer, take some time off, enjoy the other parts of your life. You deserve it.

Leadership. Leadership takes many forms. Have you seen Police Chief Brian Curran or Parks and Recreation Director Butch Kisiah lately? They have succeeded at Weight Watchers and are setting a great example of the things we can do ourselves for our own health. Read their stories below.

The Budget. The 2010-11 budget is approved. Thank you for all you have done to help us get through this recession so far with no layoffs or serious effect on employees and employee benefits. Thank you for the great service you continue to provide to the Town of Chapel Hill. You will soon be receiving information on enrolling in Benefit plans.

On-site healthcare. The Healthcare Task Force is meeting July 8 with Dr. Warren Newton, head of Family Medicine at UNC, to identify their interests and concerns as we begin designing our on-site health and medical program. If you have particular interests, let your department representative on the task force know.

OUR BIGGEST LOSERS!!

Thanks to the Employee Works Program, employees are losing weight and looking great! A group of employees has met every Wednesday at the Aquatics Center for the past 16 weeks. While this program is coming to a close, a new one will be starting soon. Learn more by contacting Mike Beckman at 969-5035.

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M.C. Russell

Senior Engineering Inspector

Hired: April 1986

He wears a pocket protector and likes concrete and bridges, but this engineer is no geek.

M.C. Russell is hard to miss, not because he is imposing at 6'3" in his usual attire - felt hat, gray ponytail tucked under, no-nonsense white cotton shirt, rolled up sleeves, Islamic pray beads. He drives a Jeep Cherokee (bumper sticker reads "Scots, the Friendly Race") with impatience. If his cell phone goes off, you will be "called to station" by the booming ring of a submarine horn. M.C. is hard to miss because he is not a quiet man.

His engineering acumen is respected in the industry and around Town Hall. The Town Design Manual (2004) is one of his best known works, as he designed the cover and illustrated technical guidelines for things like parking lot construction and tree protection.

Over 25 years of Town employment, he has inspected hundreds of construction projects. There are more than a few bridges in Chapel Hill, and he has inspected them all. And what he hasn't directly supervised, he has studied. M.C. has collected original blueprints from myriad construction projects, some of which date to the 1930s, like the Old Town Hall (1938), Ram's Plaza (1967), and a map of Chapel Hill (1932). He found many of the maps because they were left out for trash.

Value in the Spotlight

Innovation

open-minded • courageous • learning
curious • flexible • change-oriented
idea development • risk taking



Catherine Lazorko photo

After fuming over the careless disregard of historic materials, he painstakingly scanned each blueprint. Today he has thousands of pages stored in a digital image library.

"MC's value to the Town can't be measured," said Interim Town Engineer Mike Taylor. "His thorough knowledge of construction, extensive field experience, and dedication to the Town are obvious to anyone who has worked with MC. His importance to the Town goes well beyond the duties normally expected of a Senior Engineering Inspector. When a standard design will not work on a project he does the necessary research and provides alternate designs for consideration and implementa-

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COMING UP

Friday, June 18: Employee Appreciation Luncheon, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Chapel Hill High School

Sunday, July 4. Independence Day Celebration, Kenan Stadium. Gates open at 7 p.m.

Monday, July 5: Town Holiday. Most municipal offices will be closed in observance of Independence Day.

Friday, July 16: Opening Reception for Employee and Family Art Exhibition, 4:30 - 6 p.m.



Enjoy the summer! TOWNtalk will return in September.

In Brief



The Parks and Recreation family welcomed two new members recently.

Tracey

Link (Parks and Recreation) gave birth to Tavian DeShard Link at 8:03 a.m. April 5. He weighed 7 lbs. 10 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.



Steve Wright (Public Arts) and his family welcomed Sadie Jane Wright at 1:40

a.m. May 14. She weighed 6 lbs. and was 17 inches long.



Camille Takiwiwa Odei-Larbi was born on June 3 to **Ernest Odei-Larbi** (Storm-

water) and Ama. She weighed 6 lbs. 1 oz.

Communications and Public Affairs hosted a Regional Academy for the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks in April. The academy was well attended. These academies provide municipal clerks with continuing education to stay current in their field.



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

Visitors from Kosovo

Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt and Town staff members addressed a delegation of 14 local government officials from the Kosovo North Mitrovica Municipal Preparation Team. Their U.S. visit was organized by RTI International. Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is one of the newly created municipalities with a majority Serb population, carved out of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, a city of about 100,000 not far from the Serbian border, where there has been significant



tension and violence. The team is tasked with conducting the preliminary organization of the municipality.



We love and remember **Sandy Kline**, Deputy Clerk, who died on May 27 after a short illness.

Sandy was employed as Deputy Clerk for the Town of Chapel Hill and was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Siler City. Survivors include Nicholas Anthony Cook and John Lindley Cook; daughter Jennifer Kathleen Cook; and sister Debbie K. Biles. For more information about making a memorial donation to Sandy's children, please contact **Kristi McClellan** (Library) at 969-2035.

Hang out in Town Hall all summer! Submit your artwork for the Employee / Family Art Exhibition. All submissions will be exhibited in Town Hall from July 12 to Aug. 30. Share your creativity and talents with your co-workers and the community! A \$50 Best in Show and a \$25 1st Place Prize will be awarded based on public and employee voting.

Please deliver your artwork(s) to the Public Arts Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Thursday, July 8, or Friday, July 9. Each artwork must be wired for hanging or able to fit in a display case. All artwork must have the following information on the back: artist's name, the artist's department or relation to Town employee, medium and sale

price or insurance value. The exhibition will be installed by Monday, July 12, and the Opening Reception will be held Friday, July 16, from 4:30–6 pm. Friends and family are welcome and refreshments will be provided! For questions about this exhibit, please call Steve Wright at 968-2749 or email swright@townofchapelhill.org. The Public Arts Office is on the second floor of Town Hall in the Manager's wing.

Pictured below: artwork by M.C. Russell (left) and Dale A. Morgan (right).



In response to **Council Goal #1 – Steward Organizational Development**, Town Manager Roger Stancil has tasked a group of six employees to brainstorm about how we can improve the Town's internal connections, and our communication with employees and the community. **Jim Huegerich** (Police), **Rae Buckley** (Planning), **Karen Rose** (Police), **Mary Jane Nirdlinger** (Manager's Office), **John Richardson** (Manager's Office) and **Loryn Clark** (Planning) will meet over the next several months to discuss these issues and develop recommendations in these areas. If you have ideas or thoughts you would like to share about these topics, please forward your feedback to Town Manager Stancil or one of the committee members.

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.



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publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org or (919) 968-2743

Recycling

Recycle while on vacation in North Carolina. Many vacation rentals now have recycling on site, but do ask the rental agent to make sure. If not, you can find recycling almost anywhere you're headed in North Carolina this summer. Go to p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html and click on the map. Your location will pop up with a list of recycling coordinators. No web access? Call the NC Division of Pollution Prevention at 800-763-0136.

Sign up for periodic e-updates on recycling and solid waste programs—never miss another Shred A Thon! Subscribe at www.co.orange.nc.us/email/subscribeform.asp.

Friends don't let friends abuse recycling sites—dropoff containers at the Carrboro Plaza and Hillsborough Home Depot sites are being terribly abused by illegal disposal of non-recyclable materials. If you know anyone using these recycling sites improperly, urge them to stop. If you see someone dumping, feel free to let us know with a license plate and vehicle description. We spend more than 500 hours a year cleaning the unstaffed sites.

—Blair Pollock, Orange County Solid Waste Management

Support the Torch Run for Special Olympics

Buy raffle tickets now to benefit to the Chapel Hill Police Department Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. Tickets are two for \$5, four for \$10, six for \$15 or eight for \$20. The drawing will be held on July 30.

The prizes are:

- 1st Prize—Two US AIRWAYS Vouchers (US flights only) with a two-night stay at any Courtyard by Marriott Hotel
- 2nd Prize—\$500
- 3rd Prize—Overnight stay at The Franklin Hotel Presidential Suite

To purchase tickets, contact Phil Smith (Police) at psmith@townofchapelhill.org or 968-2760 ext. 134 or 614-1852. T-shirts and hats available at \$13 each!

Phil Smith thanked the 12 runners, Officer **Stephen Seagroves** and Troopers **D.L. Metts** and **B.D. Marsh** for their traffic escorts, Officers **Charlie Pardo** and **Mark Geercken** for driving the vans, Captain **Jackie Carden** for monitoring the van drivers, route and running some... and ID-Techs **Kathye Williams** and **Shelethea**

Wright-Quick for taking all the wonderful pictures for the Law Enforcement Torch Run. We started at approximately 9 a.m. hours and finished the 7.8 mile route at 10:30 a.m.

Chief Curran accepted a plaque from Bill Frick, N.C. Law Enforcement Torch Run Director, on behalf of The Chapel Hill Police Department with over \$32,000.00 raised so far this year.

Also the Chapel Hill Police Department reached a large milestone this year with over \$1,019,782 raised since 1995 for Special Olympics North Carolina.

ENJOY THE SUMMER!

TOWNtalk is on a break for the summer, and will resume in September.

Please continue to send news and photos to publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org. Vacation photos are always welcome!



Our Biggest Losers

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Here are a few of their stories. Congratulations to all! Enjoy a healthy and active summer!!

"I've lost 33 pounds! I think the most dramatic thing that I've accomplished (besides being able to tie my shoes) has been controlling my extreme acid reflux. I was on double doses of an expensive medication for this problem. By learning to eat right, I've not only lost weight, but it has been weeks since I had an incident of reflux. I've also been able cut the medication in half. I imagine that I will soon be off of it all together."

—Mike Beckman

"I have been one of those guys who was overweight, knowing that I should make some changes in my life to deal with it, but always putting off action to some ill defined someday. This spring I learned that the town, as part of the wellness program, was offering a Weight Watchers program for interested employees. I decided to give it a try, having no idea if it would be effective but wanting to do something for my overall health. That was three months ago. Since then I have lost 31

lbs., and feel better than I have in years. I am exercising more and more easily and eating healthier. The program is not hard to do, and you get results as long as you stick with it. I would encourage anybody who thinks they might be able to benefit from losing a few pounds to look into our wellness program. You might be pleasantly surprised at what you can accomplish in a relatively short period of time."

—Brian Curran

"It was last November and I was just not feeling like I had any energy. I knew I had to lose some weight, but just never really took it seriously. My wife, the athlete in the family had been giving me a hard time about my eating habits (too much fast food) and my exercise routine (non-existent). I had thought about doing something about it, but never did. It was too much trouble, I was too tired to exercise, I love sweet tea.

Then, I went to the doctor for my annual physical in November 2009, and he set me straight. Blood pressure up, cholesterol up, fatty tissue in my liver, on and on. I was faced with two alternatives. One was to go on medication for these issues or the other, lose 20 lbs. in six months

and then see what the results were.

I happened to be in the HRD office when Chief Curran was signing up for Weight Watchers at Work, part of the Town Wellness Initiative. I have never been on a diet, but after the scare from the doctor and the fact that the Chief was signing up and I knew I could lose more than him, I signed up too. That was three months ago and while the Chief is whipping me in the weight loss column, I have lost almost 28 lbs. and it shows.

I went back to the doctor for my check-up in May and my blood pressure is better than ever, I have more energy (not lugging around an extra 28 lbs. a day helps) and I feel better about myself. The program is not hard. You do get to eat, but you learn what to eat and how much to eat.

It takes time and you have to stick with it, but when you have a great group like we have in our weight watchers group that meets at the Aquatic Center, it's easier because we all support each other. I would encourage anyone who wants to lose some weight to look into the Town's wellness program. You'll feel better."

—Butch Kisiah



Thanks for a Job Well Done!

Phyllis Croff (Transit) was complimented by Roger Lundblad for her good driving skills, with assistance from **Keith Caraway**. "I was on the CW bus (left Jones Ferry at 3:50 p.m.) this afternoon and the driver did a great job of getting through a mess in front of the Weaver Street Market."

Brook Loflin and **Scott Flowers** (both Police) were thanked by Kay and Dutch Hengeveld for assisting them with a flat tire. "They could not have been kinder to two senior citizens stuck on Elliott Road with a flat tire." (From the Chapel Hill News)

Compliments



Michael Purdie (Transit) was complimented by Cindy Justice for being courteous and friendly. "He speaks to each person as they get on the bus. He tells us all to have a great day, and he sincerely cares about his riders."

Ross Tompkins (Business Management) complimented **Police and Fire staff** for their response to a car accident on Old Durham Road. "There was an air of calm professionalism about everyone and I was amazed to find that after I handed my witness report to an officer only 30-45 minutes had elapsed from the time of the collision. I think that sort of response is easily taken for granted by citizens until they need it so I want to say thank you on behalf of all the travelers on Chapel Hill's roads."

Richard "Rerun" Roberts (Transit) was thanked by Katie Cooper and Jason Derrick for helping them get to their destination on time. "Rerun took

us to the door of the daycare with one minute to spare and went out of his way to accommodate two very frustrated and concerned parents. . . . Our whole evening was changed for the better as a result of his kindness."

Darryl Russell, Clay London, Jaime Palacios, Brian Parker, Ashley Brooks, and Sam Smith (all Fire) were commended by Jane Brice for delivering excellent care for a patient in cardiac arrest. "They particularly commended 1) your thorough and superb patient care, 2) your attention to detail, 3) your calm and helpful manner, and 4) your willingness to assist them during transport to the hospital. Congratulations on a job well done!"

The **Chapel Hill Public Library** was thanked by the staff of Farmington Woods Media Center for sending them a book that was returned to the library by mistake. "You went the extra mile and we are ever so grateful."

Public Works employees **Ivan McClamb, Larry Harrington** and **Stanley Fearington** received praise from Nina Sessions for going the extra mile to clean up yard waste. "Not only did the crew take it away on Friday but they raked up any straggling debris and swept up the area afterwards."

Milton Fields (Transit) was thanked by Ms. Borko for assisting her after a fall. "He is excellent for this service."

Firefighters, including **Chris Stephens, Jef Ryan, and Bryson Butner**, were commended by Peter Smith for their calm and professional response to an EMS call. "Please pass along my sincere thanks to each of those men who responded so quickly and helped my patient in such a kind, competent way."

Len Cone expressed her appreciation to the **Police Department** for assisting with the Bike Chapel Hill-Carrboro event in May. "Our event went smoothly and our PD were praised highly . . . they assisted in several times where there could have been safety issues for the cyclists but instead all were

safe because of their efforts! I wanted you to see the attached letter of praise sent to the Mayor! Thank you so much for all that you do for our events and for our citizens!"

The **Mayor, Council, and Police Department** were thanked by Sara Stahlman for hosting the Bike Carrboro-Chapel Hill event to celebrate bike to work week 2010. "I commend the city for sending the two fabulous bicycling police officers who assisted at the event. They were invaluable to the ride. They helped facilitate the safety of the event and also sustained the solid reputation of area police officers by being friendly and professional."

Robert Sykes (Public Works) and crew were thanked by John Wasik for rebuilding a driveway entrance. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Town of Chapel Hill Public Works Department for completing the job in a prompt and efficient manner."

Spotlight: M.C. Russell

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tion. He is willing to take on any task and stays on it until completion."

On his days off, M.C. makes exquisite handcrafted leatherwork including satchels and belts. He inherited the talent from his father who had a leather and upholstery shop, and from his grandfather who worked on horse harnesses and appliances on a Randolph County, N.C. farm. He also paints in watercolor and oils, and works in wood, creating furniture including a red oak poster bed for his wife and small items such as walking canes, all with ornate carvings. On weekends, you might find him treasure hunting at PTA Thrift Store, in search of Italian leather.

M.C., short for Michael Charles, is married to Barbara Stenross, and they recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Their son, Adam, is a surveyor and lives in Chatham County.

"MC is usually one of the first people in the office and often the last person to leave," Taylor said. "I don't know if you would call him a 'diamond in the rough,' but he was definitely a great find for the Town of Chapel Hill."