



# TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees



March/April 2016  
Vol. 12, No. 7

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

## Recognizing Employee Excellence

Who will win our highest employee honor for 2016?

Nominate your outstanding co-workers for the Cal Horton Service Award! There is no greater professional honor than to be recognized by your peers for a job well done.

The W. Calvin Horton Service Award was established in 2007 with funds raised by the Foundation for a Sustainable Community Inc., a not-for-profit charitable corporation under the auspices of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. Each year a Town of Chapel Hill employee is selected to receive the award based on his or her distinguished service and contributions to the community. The recipient will receive an inscribed glass plaque and a cash stipend.

Past winners of the Cal Horton Award are:

- Amy Harvey (CaPA), 2015
- CoCo Hall (Business Management), 2014
- Colleen Lanigan (Parks and Recreation), 2012
- Nate Davis (Parks and Recreation), 2011
- Maggie Burnett (Public Works), 2010
- Jim Huegerich (Ombuds), 2009
- Larry Stroud (Public Works), 2008

The nomination deadline is May 6. Pick up a nomination form from Human Resource Development on the second floor of Town Hall or download a form at [www.townofchapelhill.org/towntalk](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/towntalk).

The award winner will be announced at Employee Appreciation Day on July 15 at the Friday Center.



## Venita Bradshaw

Assistant Parking Services Supervisor Venita Bradshaw practices the Town's RESPECT value Communication with co-workers in the office, customers on the streets, and with her family at home.

"My fiancé tells me, 'you don't have to keep repeating yourself,'" she says. "I tell him, 'yes I do; it's important to make sure we're on the same page'."

She says putting down the phone and talking face-to-face is important.

"You can't read people's emotions in a text," she says. "Miscommunication can make you mad at one another, and it's often just a misunderstanding."

Most of the communication Venita and the rest of the Parking Services division get is highly negative. It often consists of people who park refusing a ticket.

"Just a couple weeks ago, I had a gentleman who was yelling at me—with plenty of expletives—about a courtesy ticket," she says. "There isn't even a charge for those."

She says she's got a special folder for the good moments, though.

"I just had a man call a few weeks ago," she says. "He's from New York, and he said, 'I just got a ticket, and I'd like to pay it right now'."

She says she was so surprised at how excited he was to pay it.

"He said, 'if I got a parking ticket in New York, it would be \$200; this one's only \$15,'" she

## Value in the Spotlight

# Communication



says. "That one went right into the 'feel good folder'."

She says Parking Services' goal is to improve the opinion of parking in Chapel Hill by informing residents and visitors how to use the systems.

Venita started her career in Lynchburg, Va. She came to Chapel Hill in July 2012.

She lives in Mebane with her fiancé, Kenneth, and her three children: seven-month-old, Kennacy, two-year-old, Kengston, and 14-year-old, Nyria.

"I love my babies; they keep me young," she says. "However, sometimes it's good to come to work to relax."

## COMING UP

**Fridays through June 3:** Live & Local Music & Arts, 6–9 p.m., Plaza at 140 W. Franklin St.

**Saturday, April 23:** Tar Heel 10 Miler [tarheel10miler.com](http://tarheel10miler.com)

**Thursday, April 28:** Shred-A-Thon, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., University Place parking lot

**April 30–May 1:** Spring Garden Tour [chapelhillgardentour.net](http://chapelhillgardentour.net)



What do you think about TOWNtalk? Take the survey at [surveymonkey.com/r/towntalksurvey](http://surveymonkey.com/r/towntalksurvey)!

# In Brief

**Nate Davis** (Parks and Recreation), **Amy Harvey** (CaPA) and **Debra Lane** (Parks and Recreation) were honored as Hometown Heroes by WCHL on Feb. 7. Hometown Heroes are recognized for their outstanding service to the community and being role models to those around them. Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized? Nominate them at [chapelboro.com/category/wchl/features/village-pride-awards](http://chapelboro.com/category/wchl/features/village-pride-awards).

**Robert Farrell** (Transit) has been promoted to Mechanic II—Bus. Robert has worked for Chapel Hill Transit for 16 years and has an extensive knowledge of our fleet. He was featured in an article in the News & Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/hsd8hpy>

**Ben Hitchings** has been appointed as the new Director of Development and Planning Services. He will oversee development and permitting activities starting in April.

**Mike Rempson** (Public Works—Traffic Engineering) has been promoted to Traffic Signal Systems Analyst.

**A scholarship is available** for children of local government employees. The Warren Jake Wicker Undergraduate Scholarship is awarded annually to a high school senior who will be attending UNC-Chapel Hill as a freshman in 2016. The \$1,000 award is offered to freshmen with at least one parent who has been continuously employed full-time by a North Carolina city or county government for at least five years prior to Jan. 1, 2016. Applications must be submitted to the UNC Office of Scholarships and Student Aid by May 1, 2016. For information and an application form, contact Torie Davis Forte at [torie\\_forte@unc.edu](mailto:torie_forte@unc.edu) or 919-843-1619.

**Festifall applications** are now being accepted. Festifall will be held on Saturday, Oct. 1. If you would like to have a table for your department at Festifall, apply online at [www.chapelhillfestifall.com/applications](http://www.chapelhillfestifall.com/applications).

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

## It's time to do the HRA!

The Health Risk Assessment (HRA) Drive will run through May for employees on the Town's health insurance plan.

There are just three easy steps—

1. Complete a health survey
2. Give a small blood sample
3. Get your weight and blood pressure checked

What do you get? The cost-sharing contribution for health insurance (\$10 per pay period) will be waived for employees who complete the HRA. You'll also get information to improve your health and a \$25 gift card.

Come to any HRA clinic that is convenient. You do not have to make an appointment. If you would like to make an appointment, visit [www.chapelhillwellnessatwork.org](http://www.chapelhillwellnessatwork.org) and click on "Schedule your Annual HRA Review." If you do not have access to the internet, contact the Wellness Clinic at 919-968-2796.

Questions? Call the Clinic at 919-968-2796 or visit [chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/hra-frequently-asked-questions](http://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/hra-frequently-asked-questions).



### Upcoming dates and locations

Tues, April 12, 8 a.m.—noon, Transit

Thurs, April 14, 8 a.m.—noon, Clinic

Friday, April 15, 1–5 p.m., Public Works Bldg 2

Tues, April 19, 8 a.m.—noon, Public Works Bldg 2

Thurs, April 21, 8 a.m.—noon, Clinic

Friday, April 22, 8 a.m.—noon, Public Works Bldg 2

Tues, April 26, 8 a.m.—noon, Clinic

Friday, April 29, 8 a.m.—noon, Fire Training Center



On March 2, Chapel Hill Transit held a BBQ to celebrate accomplishments following the end of another basketball season. We proudly carried nearly 92,000 passengers this season. Special thanks to Grill Master Extraordinaire **Jessie Cameron** and hostesses **Eva Cohn** and **Tammy Price**.

**The 2016 UNC Science Expo** will offer fascinating activities for all ages from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 9, on Cameron Avenue. The 2016 Expo will focus on the environment, sustainability and conservation. The Solar Stage line-up, sponsored by the Town of Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department, includes the improv comedy of DSI Comedy Theatre, a Chemistry Magic Show, musical performances and more.

The Solar Energy Trailer, sponsored by the Cultural Arts Division, is a mobile, energy-creating work of art that transports gear and powers community events using solar energy.



*At the Housing and Community holiday celebration on Dec. 17, staff gathered to play games, guess the Secret Santa, and enjoy a delicious breakfast prepared by Police Capt. Jeff Clark (retired).*

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.



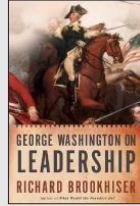
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## Leaders Are Readers

No matter whom you plan to cast your vote for this fall, there's no debate — studying the lives of the Presidents can provide insight for leaders. Here are a few items from the Library's collections that you might find interesting and inspiring:

*George Washington on Leadership* by Richard Brookhiser

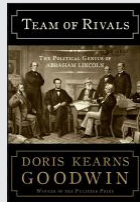
You knew he chopped down the cherry tree and crossed the Delaware, but did you know that George Washington was also a shrewd talent scout, highly self-aware, and was always focused on outcomes? The author threads anecdotes from Washington's various careers to offer leadership lessons.



*Team of Rivals*

by Doris Kearns Goodwin

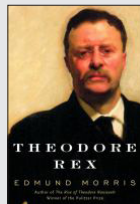
Town Manager Roger Stencil recommends this book about Lincoln, which examines not just the President, but his leadership team as well. Many books cover Lincoln's life and legacy, but this one focuses on his strategy of choosing the very rivals he competed against as his closest advisors — which is cited as one of the primary reasons for his success in the White House.



*Theodore Rex*

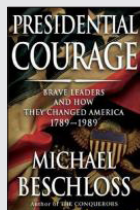
by Edmund Morris

At the age of 42, and because of an assassin's bullet, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt accepted the greatest leadership position of all. This book tells of how he rallied the nation in the wake of tragedy, took on great social issues, and surpassed everyone's expectations of "that damned cowboy." This is the second in a trilogy of books that covers Roosevelt's life, preceded by *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* and followed by *Colonel Roosevelt*.



*Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America, 1789-1989* by Michael Beschloss

A highly readable volume that focuses on one trait of great leaders — courage. The author covers everyone from Lincoln to Kennedy and Truman to Reagan, sharing moments from their presidencies that required both wisdom and fearlessness in order to lead the country through times of turmoil.



## Leadership Circles Spring 2016: Innovation & Creativity

Leadership circles are an employee led, peer-to-peer way of exploring topics of mutual interest.

All sessions will be held from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. at the Chapel Hill Public Library. Please note that the dates have changed.

### April 19: Achieving Better Balance

Did you eat popcorn for dinner because you were focused on finishing that report? Got a life hack you want to share? Join us to explore the challenge of work/life balance and share solutions that work.

To register for one or all of the sessions, email Anita Badrock at [abadrock@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:abadrock@townofchapelhill.org).

For questions, contact Anita Badrock, Michelle Guarino or Jeff York.



### Tips to Prevent Conflict with Coworkers

To prevent conflict with coworkers, be a good coworker yourself. Consideration and conversation with coworkers goes a long way. To be a good coworker:

**Get to know your coworker.** Most of us, even though we might come from very different backgrounds, have very similar needs — safety, value, and respect. Just knowing that others are ordinary people trying to do their best can go a long way to prevent conflict.

**Be aware of differences.** Differences in age, ethnic backgrounds, or years in the workforce can lead to conflicting expectations or misunderstandings. Focus on what you have in common.

**Consider your coworker's point of view.** How does your work area, equipment, the way you dress or how you deal with people look from where your coworker sits?

**Keep your coworkers informed.** What we do impacts others. Contact coworkers before undertaking something that might affect them — any significant changes that may impact the way they work or how they feel valued: new policies and procedures, new equipment. Good — regular, transparent, and accurate communication is essential for any healthy relationship. Keeping your coworkers informed ahead of time allows them to make plans or tell you how your project/actions affects them. Seeking their input goes a long way in communicating their worth and preventing misunderstandings.

**Be respectful.** Talk directly with the coworker involved about a problem situation. Don't gossip or snip or be sarcastic through the

rumor mill. That can damage relationships and create trouble.

**Be candid.** If your coworker does something that bothers you or in a manner you believe does not reflect our Values, let him or her know. By communicating early and respectfully, you both take a step toward solving the problem. Further, they may share a perspective with you that you did not consider which might affect your decision or behavior. Alternatively, you might share new information with the other person that might better help them understand your decision or your behavior.

**Seek to understand.** If your coworker does something that irritates you, don't assume it was on purpose. Seek to understand WITHOUT the emotions that come from assumptions. If a coworker approaches you accusingly about a difficulty, listen carefully and thank them for telling you how they feel. You don't have to agree or justify your behavior.

**Listen well.** When you discuss a problem, try to understand how your coworker feels about the issue and why. Understanding is not the same as agreeing.

**Take your time.** If you need to, take a break to think about what you and your coworker have discussed. Arrange to finish the conversation later, and then do so.

**Get help when needed.** Communication can resolve conflict, but at times you may need help from a neutral third party trained in facilitating difficult conversations or conflict resolution. Your Ombuds is a good resource to help you explore having or facilitating a difficult conversation with a coworker. Conflict can be an opportunity for increased understanding and improved communications and relationships when handled properly.

— Jim Huegerich, Town Ombuds  
919-265-0806 or [ombuds@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:ombuds@townofchapelhill.org)

# Our Employees: Friendly, Helpful, Responsive & Engaged

## Weathering the Storm at the Library

During the Tornado Warning in February, we had about 150 people take shelter in our lower level. In addition to our typical safety protocols, my staff seized the opportunity to make it a delightful experience! Here's some info from the Staff Debrief I sent out:

Beyond the roles and responsibilities outlined in our protocol, I observed staff acting in a way that is true to our Chapel Hill Public Library Values and Service Pledge:

Once downstairs, staff opened up the Historical Society area and Friends Sorting Room for extra space and seating. I observed staff offering assistance if needed, asking questions, offering chairs, helping people connect their devices to power outlets, etc.



I saw **Susan Maguire** bring down magazines from upstairs and pass them out to folks.

I saw Youth & Family Experiences staff fetching books for kids and parents, as well as



bringing down coloring pages and crayons.

As the warning got longer and longer, **Daniel Siler** seized the moment to both make the experience delightful (and make room in our freezers) by bringing out Freeze Pops and offering them to all. I saw many a parent, child, senior citizen, and several staff members enjoying this treat!

From what I saw, this was one of those times that, even in the face of Severe Weather, we worked together to make people our top priority, and to be friendly and helpful and responsive and engaged. I think we took a difficult situation and made it shine! As one patron left, she said to a staff member "Thanks for your hospitality!"

—Susan Brown, Director,  
Chapel Hill Public Library

## Wellness Profile

**Timothy Chaplin** (Public Works) quit smoking almost two years ago and says "I never should have started." Did you know that 85 percent of people who smoke wish they never started?

Timothy expresses pride in his accomplishment and is glad to be tobacco free. He breathes better, has more consistent energy (without needing a "boost" from cigarettes), and saves money. In addition, his daughter's asthma problems have subsided. He recently passed his Commercial Drivers License exam, and looks forward to being able to drive Public Works trucks.

If you would like to quit smoking or using tobacco, Wellness@Work offers individual coaching by a tobacco treatment specialist. Nicotine patches, gum and lozenges are free to participants. The program's \$100 incentive after 6 and 12 months tobacco free provides extra encouragement. Contact Barbara Silver at 984-974-8455 or barbara\_silver@med.unc.edu to enroll.



## Compliments



**Dwight McLaren** (Transit) was thanked by Caroline Welles for waiting for her while she was crossing the street to catch a bus.

**Kumar Neppalli** (Traffic Engineering) was thanked by John Blythe for being responsive.

John D. Martin III thanked **the Town** for moving lane closure signs off the sidewalk on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

**Fonda McCaddon** (Transit) was thanked by **Jim Huegerich** (Ombuds) for stopping to pick him up during wintry weather.

**Meeghan Rosen** (Library) was thanked by **Mary Jane Nirdlinger** (Planning) for sharing what the library has been doing for customer service and space design with planning and sustainability staff.

**Nikeisha Wyatt** and **Eric Dallin** (both Police) were thanked by Cub Scout Pack 283 for giving them a tour of the Police Department.

**Ronald Watson** (Transit) was commended by Mirta Mihovilovic for waiting for her at the bus stop. "He went beyond the call of duty when he waited till I was able to board the last CL bus of the day."

**Tracy Harris** (Transit) was commended by Brian Burbank for calmly defusing an altercation between two intoxicated men.

**Brian Litchfield** (Transit) thanked the transit operators who helped make Tar Heel Express a success.

**Patricia White** (Transit) was commended by an anonymous UNC student. "Thank you for a friendly greeting and a smile."

**Kumar Neppalli** (Traffic Engineering) was thanked by Erin Daniel for installing speed bumps in the Westwood neighborhood.

**Andre Jones** (Public Works) was praised by Anita Farel for his hard work and precision.

### Overheard on Social Media:

Katie Coleman Walker posted to Facebook, "Two of your officers just made my son's day today by coming back into The Loop and giving him a sticker. Thanks for all you do for the community!"



**Christine Freel** (Transit) was commended by Andy Chan: "Bus 1306's operator's smile and positive attitude is very much appreciated after a long day at work. Thank you!"

**Carol Brown-Lopez** (Transit) was complimented by Andy Chan: "the operator of bus 1314 on the J route right now is so nice. :)"

**Reginald Mebane** (Transit) was complimented by Choochoo: "the driver of 1301 (RU) right now is the nicest bus driver ever."

