



MINT HILL NEWS

Serving the Citizens of the Town of Mint Hill

December 2012



MINT HILL NEWS

TOWN OF MINT HILL • PO BOX 23457
MINT HILL, NORTH CAROLINA 28227-0272
www.minthill.com



Upcoming Events



TOWN HALL OPEN HOUSE

4430 Mint Hill Village Lane
Sunday, December 2, from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

4430 Mint Hill Village Lane
Sunday, December 2, 5:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE MINT HILL POLICE DEPT.

7200 Matthews-Mint Hill Road
Tuesday, December 18, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

TOWN HALL HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

November 22 and 23 (Thanksgiving)
December 24 and 25 (Christmas)
January 1 thru New Year's Day



Mint Hill Police Department News

CHARLOTTE, NC (Oct. 19, 2012)

The Town of Mint Hill was named a 2012 North Carolina Outstanding Traffic Safe Community by AAA Carolinas Foundation for Traffic Safety. James Speed and Smedes York, board members of the Foundation for Traffic Safety, honored the local law enforcement and community representatives.

Patrol Officer Scott Blevins of the Mint Hill Police Department accepted the award during a ceremony on Oct. 18 at the Washington Duke Inn and Golf Club in Durham.

In all, 16 total North Carolina locations were honored, including three grand winners (Highlands, Holly Springs and Chapel Hill) during the ninth annual awards luncheon hosted by AAA Carolinas' Foundation

for Traffic Safety. Mint Hill was one of five winners in the 10,000-30,000 population category.

AAA Carolinas' Foundation for Traffic Safety provides awards in an effort to recognize those cities that make a strong effort to make our state's roads safer.

"North Carolina faces three serious statewide traffic safety challenges: unlicensed drivers, the high number of teen driving deaths and a continued increase in pedestrian deaths statewide. Through enforcement, education and strong legislation and the examples of these communities, we can continue to save lives in North Carolina," Crosby said.



Members of the AAA Management team with Mint Hill Police Officer Scott Blevins (center)

AAA Carolinas' Foundation for Traffic Safety is a non-profit organization founded by AAA Carolinas and funded by AAA Carolinas' member contributions that works to promote traffic safety initiatives in North and South Carolina.



Mayor's Message

Mayor Ted Biggers, Jr.

The year is swiftly coming to a close and the holidays are fast approaching. As a fitting end to a busy and exciting 2012, there are a few announcements at Town Hall that are important to note.

The new Town Hall building is now complete. The elegant structure's presence at the Town's center is a testament to art and a source of pride to citizens. Our third President, Thomas Jefferson, was also a great architect and wrote, "Architecture [is] worth great attention. It is then among the most important arts." We feel that President Jefferson would approve of the new Town Hall. You will have an opportunity to take a tour during the open house scheduled Sunday, December 2, from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The address is 4430 Mint Hill Village Lane.

After the open house, the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony will take place at 5:30 p.m. in front of Town Hall. Christmas music will be performed and refreshments served prior to the tree lighting ceremony. Please do not forget your cameras because there will be photo opportunities with the guest of honor, Santa Claus.

Not only do we have a new Town Hall but a new website design as well. Information regarding Town government, services, events and a host of other information is available on-line. In addition, you may sign in under "Notify Me" to receive e-mails and text messages regarding items on upcoming meetings, employment opportunities, and a monthly list and map of all new and active development cases in Mint Hill. Stay informed by visiting www.minthill.com.

In closing, we regretfully say good bye to long-time Town Clerk Beth Hamrick. She will be retiring at the end of November. Most of our citizens have had the opportunity to meet Beth at the monthly Board meetings, the annual Veterans' Day Breakfasts or at any of the many Town events throughout the years. She has been a devoted and diligent leader in our community. She will be greatly missed at Town Hall but hope to see her often around Town.

Have a safe and very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Warmest regards,

Ted Biggers

Mayor Ted Biggers

SAVE THE DATE

Town Hall Open House
Sunday, Dec. 2 @ 3 pm

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
Sunday, Dec. 2 @ 5:30 pm

Have Questions?
Call Town Hall at 704-545-9726



The Mayor, Commissioners and staff contributed articles to this newsletter.
The Mint Hill News is published by the Town of Mint Hill and mailed to each household in Town.



Leaves, leaves everywhere

Charlotte, North Carolina is a city of beautiful trees, many deciduous, which shed their leaves each year. Autumn is the primary time for deciduous trees like maples, poplars, and many of the oaks and elms to shed their leaves, although it can happen at other times also. Before you throw your hands up in despair, here are a few suggestions for what you might do with all those leaves blowing about in your yard this fall.

Shred leaves with a leaf shredder or with your lawn mower. Pile dry leaves a few inches high and go over them several times with the mower. Incorporate shredded leaves into compost or use for mulching.

Spread shredded leaves mixed with grass clippings around trees and shrubbery in the fall as mulch, spreading 2-3 inches deep. Contrary to a popular, but unwise practice by some landscaping companies, soil dug from the planting hole and copious amounts of mulch should not be piled up and around the trunk of a tree. The bottom portion of the truck where the tree begins to splay or flare should be completely visible. A two- to three-inch

layer of mulch is all that is needed and even this should not be piled up around the trunk. Such an application will allow air and water to penetrate into the soil below and not smother the tree roots, many of which are close to the surface of the ground. Personally, I like to remove grass out to the drip line of my trees and provide a naturalized circle beneath. This area can easily and affordably be mulched using the dry shredded leaves from branches above. Just think, it's that much less grass to mow—and there will never be any risk of a lawnmower or weed-trimmer damaging the bark of your tree.

Start a compost pile and layer leaves into the pile where they will break down into a dark, crumbly material in a short while. Consider leaves as "brown" material and alternate them into your compost bin with "greens" such as grass, garden clippings and vegetable food wastes. Shredded leaves will decompose much more quickly than whole leaves, which tend to mat. If you live in a populated area, try to place your composting area in as out-of-the-way place as possible and keep it neat,

so as not to offend the neighbors.

Till leaves directly into the garden. Do this work in the fall and by spring; the organic materials will be decomposed and blended into the soil. The soil will be noticeably looser, friendlier and healthier for spring planting.

Sheet compost an unused portion of your garden in the fall with leaves. Spread a 3-4 inch layer of leaves and other organic materials over the soil then cover with a two-inch layer of soil. Allow the organic material to decay at least three months before cultivating in the spring.

Debbie Moore Clark is a published writer, public speaker, former instructor at Charlotte's Central Piedmont Community College, herb gardener, and Extension Master Gardener Volunteer with Mecklenburg County.

*** REMINDER**
Leaves and grass clippings must be placed in plastic garbage bags, preferably clear and no more than 10 bags. Please set at the curb next to the rollouts in order to be removed with the weekly garbage pickup.



Thank you, Beth



TOWN CLERK BETH HAMRICK RETIRES

As they say, all good things must come to an end, and so it goes with Town Clerk Beth Hamrick. She is retiring after 32 years with the Town. The following is a conversation with Beth about her years of service.

Q: You began your employment with the Town of Mint Hill March 15, 1980. What are some of the changes that you witnessed during the past 32 years?

Beth: In 1980, the Town of Mint Hill had 7,793 citizens and a total of seven employees. We've grown to over 60 full-time employees and have almost tripled the population in 2012. All correspondence was typed on electric typewriters until the mid 80's, and the accounting was posted manually until around 1990. The addition of personal computers and advancement in technology has certainly been a welcomed change. I've worked through 16 municipal elections and served under the leadership of 19 different elected officials, including four mayors. In 2000, the Town changed from a mayor/council to council/manager form of government. I started working at the Town Hall located in a storefront in the McEwen Shopping Center near the intersection of Lawyers and the Matthews-Mint Hill Roads; moved in 1983 to the Town Hall at 7151 Matthews-Mint Hill Road; and in September 2012, moved to the Town Hall at 4430 Mint Hill Village Lane.

Q: You did not begin your employment as the Town Clerk. What positions have you held, and how did you become the Town Clerk?

Beth: I have held the following positions: secretary/receptionist to the Town Administrator, Planning/Zoning Coordinator, Clerk to the Planning Board, and assisting with tax collections. Around 1982 I became the Deputy Clerk and Assistant Tax Collector. In 1985, the Board appointed me as Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and Tax Collector, and in 2000 reclassified my position to Assistant Manager/Town Clerk.

I've been fortunate to have great mentors and equally fortunate to have the Board members' support to further my knowledge through attending various classes at the UNC School of Government. In addition to the Clerk's Department, I've had the opportunity over the past thirty-two years to work at one time or another in every administrative department – finance, human resources, zoning and management, and served one year as the Interim Town Administrator.

Q: As the Town Clerk, you were very involved in the N.C. Clerk's Association and was awarded this past August the prestigious designation of North Carolina Certified Municipal Clerks (NCCMC) from the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks. How did this organization benefit you and the Town?

Beth: I cannot say enough good things about the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks (NCAMC). North Carolina's municipalities definitely reap the benefits from the knowledge gained by the Clerks through the assistance of the Association. The Association - combined with the School of Government and the League of Municipalities - developed the educational programs and offered course hours that assisted me in earning the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) in 1991, Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) in 2004 and NCCMC in 2012. The Association serves as a tremendous support group for clerks, even providing a mentoring program for new clerks. Because the NCAMC has

meant so much to me and others, I was truly honored to serve as the Association's State President in Fiscal Year 2000.

Q: What advice would you give the new Town Clerk?

Beth: Always remember that without the citizens there is no need for local government, so keep a schedule flexible enough to have time for the citizens. In addition, subscribe to the principles of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks' Code of Ethics, which include affirmations "to uphold constitutional government and laws of the community;" and "render equal service and extend the same treatment to all."

Q: What will you miss most as Town Clerk, and what did you enjoy most?

Beth: Without a doubt, I'll miss the regular interaction with the Town's employees, the citizens of Mint Hill and the Clerks in North Carolina. This interaction is what I've enjoyed most.

Q: What are your plans for this new and exciting phase of your life?

Beth: I've spent more than half of my life planning my personal time around the Town's work and meeting schedules, so I really don't want to commit to any specific plans right now. It's just going to be nice not to have to plan family celebrations (birthdays and special occasions) around meeting schedules. My husband, Carleton, has been retired for about five years, and I'm looking forward to spending more time with him and our family.

Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department News



Fire Department Operations Director David Leath

NEW FIRE OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, DAVID A. LEATH

anniversary of providing emergency services to our community. The Town's Founding Fathers realized the need to organize a volunteer fire department to help protect our neighbors.

The first fire engine was built by some of the volunteers and was parked under a shade tree by day and within a wash bay of a service station by night. From these modest and humble beginnings, our department has grown with our service district, becoming the only fire department within our region to provide fire suppression, rescue service and paramedic ambulance service.

When the department was first organized, it depended entirely on volunteer personnel to operate all of the equipment, a responsibility we cannot rely on solely today. Fortunately, the Town realized the importance of our mission and hired one person assigned to the fire service that included getting the equipment to the scene and knowing the volunteer members would respond. The need for additional apparatus and manpower has expanded to our current staff of eighteen paid personnel. The mission of these persons, supported by the volunteers, remains the same - man the station, respond to calls, and remember our mission of "help thy neighbor."

The Mint Hill Fire Department has a new Fire Operations Director, David A. Leath, as of April 2012. A long time resident and employee of the Fire Department, David is a familiar face around Town. He began his employment as a paid Town firefighter/paramedic on June 3, 1996. The following is a conversation with David on the current status and future direction of the department.

Q: David, give us a brief history lesson of the fire department. How does the coordination between paid staff members and volunteers work?

David: Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1952, observing this year's sixtieth

Q: Today more than eighty percent of fire departments perform some level of emergency medical services (EMS), making professional fire fighters the largest group of providers of pre-hospital emergency care in the United States. The Town of Mint Hill is fortunate to have a combination department. What do you see as the future for EMS in this rapidly evolving medical care system?

David: The Mint Hill community is extremely fortunate that the volunteer fire department has two ambulances for emergency medical service needs that function at the paramedic level. The combined services of fire and EMS provide the community with a unique level of emergency care, considering a very high fire suppression rating, paramedic certified emergency medical service and rescue personnel available 24/7.

Q: What is your vision for the department as the new Fire Department Operations Director?

David: My vision of the future of the Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department is that as our community continues to grow, needs for services will increase. We will continue the high level of fire protection and medical care that our citizens deserve.



GREASE AND DRIPPINGS BAD FOR PIPES



Most water pollution comes from everyday people doing everyday activities. As we drive our cars, take care of our homes, lawns and walk our dogs, we may contribute to water pollution, often without realizing it.

One everyday activity that has a huge impact on the environment is how we dispose of cooking grease. Liquefied animal fats, greases and vegetable oils should not be poured into sink drains. The grease hardens and sticks to the insides of sanitary sewer pipes. The buildup can clog pipes, causing raw sewage to back up into your home or overflow from manholes. Because many sanitary sewer pipelines run next to waterways, overflowing sewage often winds up in our streams and lakes.

What are the proper ways to dispose of grease?

FREEZE ANIMAL FATS in a can and dispose of in a trash receptacle.

MIX LIQUID vegetable fats with an absorbent material, such as cat litter or coffee grounds, and place in a lidded container and dispose of in a trash receptacle.

TAKE LARGE AMOUNTS OF COOKING OIL to nearest Mecklenburg County Recycling Center. Call 311, Charlotte Mecklenburg Citizen Services, for information.

There are over 3,000 miles of creek in Mecklenburg County. Citizen reporting is imperative to notifying us of existing problems.

If you notice sewer odors in a creek, discolored creek water, overflowing manholes, or dead fish or aquatic life, call 311. Storm Water Services' Water Quality staff will respond quickly, find the source of the problem and make sure it is corrected.