

Earning your age, turning 40 is blissful

BY ROXANNE POWERS

On June 20, I turned 40. (Why does this elicit visions of those telephone people with those big cardboard numbers?) I have two reasons for telling you this. One, because I wanted to tell someone before my husband beat me to it; and two, because I like getting greeting cards in the mail. One of the reasons I like getting cards in the mail, is that the mail box serves as a reminder that should the renovations at my house take so long that it is eventually condemned, at least I'll have someplace to go.

You see, for the past six years, some form of renovation has taken place on our 80-year old house. That wouldn't be so bad, because we initially calculated that the renovations would take about five years, and everyone knows that these things always take longer than estimated. Unless you're a bird.

Every year I hang ferns around the expanse of our prized wrap-around porch; and every year there is a contest between myself and as-yet-to-be-determined kind of bird. We have an agreement. If I catch her in the early stages of constructing a nest, I get to disentangle her twigs and straw from the delicate fronds of my fern. If, on the other hand, she gets far enough into construction that her efforts actually look like a nest, she gets squatters rights. She always wins.

Losing to her didn't really bother me too much in the past, when the only repercussions were that my fern would take a bit of a beating from her wings, and that I would have to go to great pains to water my fern without drowning her babies. But when realization dawned that it seemed to take her about six hours to complete her house, and that it has taken almost six years and two dozen men to almost complete mine, I'll admit to some petty feelings of jealousy.

Then, to add injury to insult, within days she had five eggs in her nest, while that took me 16 years. In a few short weeks she managed to teach her babies to fly. My first baby is almost 20 years old, and I still haven't managed to teach him how to get out of bed before noon without considerable prodding! He seems convinced that there is still some way to get the computer to do that for him.

The business of turning 40 is an interesting thing. It's the only age that I can honestly say I've prepared myself for...for the past three years. It sounds like such a dignified number, that I wanted to be sure that I was worthy of it. I also wanted to make sure that I was headed for somewhere. I knew that to get there I had a lot of work to do. So I rolled up my sleeves and got to work.

First on my list was to quit smoking. Because it was a long established addiction, I knew that if I could accomplish that, I could accomplish anything, including losing the weight I gained because I quit smoking.

Second on my list was to learn to speak up when my feelings got hurt, rather than to "stew until I blew." This time, I lost a few relationships, but over time I've gained peace of mind.

Perhaps that is what this thing called aging gracefully is really all about; accepting that life is really nothing more than a series of trade offs.

I've experienced many other personal trials and triumphs in this endeavor to "earn my age," and they've all been worth it. The past few years of my life have undoubtedly been the best years of my life; so much so, in fact, that I think I'll get to work on "earning" my 50th birthday.



Photo by Mary Beth Phillips

ARBOREAL HONOR: AT&T of Morrisville donated a holly tree in memory of officer Earl Godwin, who was killed in the line of duty last month. The tree was planted at the police station on Page Street, but police plan to move it to the new police headquarters near Town Hall when construction is completed in the fall. At back, Michael Poe, Rob Forster, Van Alston, Morrisville Police Chief Bruce Newnam, Danny Ennis, Perry Johnson; at front, Tiffany Aikens, Renee McLamb, Sarona Kelley of the Wake County Sheriff's Department, and Morrisville officer Felicia Sykes, (squatting) Marcus Harvey.

Town retires Goodwin's K-9 partner, gives him to widow

K-9 officer Grey was retired from service with the Morrisville Police Department and presented to Officer Earl Godwin's wife, Allyson, at the meeting of the Morrisville Town Board of Commissioners on May 28.

The resolution that the board passed stated that "It is unlikely that Grey would ever work effectively with another officer... Grey resided with Sgt. and Mrs. Godwin in their home and was considered part of the

Godwin family."

Town Manager David Hodgkins said in a memorandum that giving Grey to Mrs. Godwin "would be a fitting tribute to Sgt. Godwin and permit Grey to live where he has lived since he came to the Morrisville Police Department."

Sgt. Godwin was killed in an automobile accident on May 22 while answering a police call. Grey had been Godwin's "partner" since 1993.

The town board adopted a resolution thanking the town of Cary for its help during the funeral of Police Officer Earl Godwin on May 27.

Cary police officers had staffed the town while Morrisville officers attended the funeral.

"Cary went well beyond being a good neighbor," said Commissioner C.T. Moore, after Mayor Margaret Broadwell presented the resolution that she had drawn up. The resolution passed unanimously.

New expense account procedures for town; Silver-Smith receives no support on fees

Commissioner C. T. Moore made sure Monday night that no board members were charging mileage for trips within Wake County.

His motion was supported unanimously that anything in Wake County should be considered local and mileage should not be charged. "Do not infer that anyone has been doing wrong," Mayor Margaret Broadwell said after the vote. "The policy has been in place at least since 1984, whether or not you chose to take advantage of it."

At a previous meeting, Moore made a motion that expense accounts for commissioners must come before the board for approval.

Moore commented that it was an unspoken rule that mileage less than 50 miles should not be turned in. "Our pay is our expense," he said.

"When we voted a \$1,000 raise the last time, we done it for expenses," he said. "We don't turn in mileage for anything that's under 50 miles from Morrisville, and nobody ever has, I don't believe."

"Yes, they have routinely," responded Mayor Margaret Broadwell. "In past years, we've always done it that way, and nobody has brought it to my attention that anything had changed."

Mrs. Broadwell said, "I'm sure this is directed to me, and I will say publicly that if anyone wants a copy of anything that's gone into the town, it's public record, and if you have any difficulty getting it that way, come to me and I'll give it to you right now. I have it all at the house; I keep accurate records. Certainly I can tell you all the places I've been on behalf of the town."

"I didn't mention any names," Moore said. "This is coming from a different place."

The motion passed unanimously. The board unanimously adopted a 10-year solid waste management plan that was formed by the county with input from local municipalities.

Commissioner Mark Silver-Smith got no support from his fellow board members when he asked that an administrative charge for residential water accounts be studied.

He said his neighbors had wondered why an administrative fee of \$3.07 was charged for use of portable irrigation meters.

After some discussion, Commissioner C.T. Moore made the motion to take the item off the agenda and not bring it back for a year.

The motion passed in a 4-1 split, with Silver-Smith dissenting.

Morrisville Town Board adopts 1997-98 budget

Commissioner Silver-Smith objects to high salaries

The Morrisville Board of Commissioners adopted the Fiscal Year 1997-1998 budget in a 4-1 split decision on May 28, after Commissioner Mark Silver-Smith complained that it was not conservative enough.

Silver-Smith said salaries for town employees were "out of control," and objected to spending \$100,000 on a utility building for the Public Works Department.

A public hearing had drawn only one speaker, Delores Scott of Shiloh, who wondered where in the budget was the money for water and sewer for the rest of the Shiloh community.

Town Manager David Hodgkins assured her that the money was still in the capital reserve fund for the project. Town Engineer Jay Gibson is working on a plan for the unserved areas of Shiloh.

Later in the meeting, Commissioner Billy Sauls made a motion to amend the budget to move \$12,000 from board contingency to fund the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce. The chamber had requested \$24,000. No funding for the chamber had been included in the earlier version of the budget. His motion passed unanimously.

Later in the meeting, Silver-Smith insulted Town Manager David Hodgkins and Police Chief Bruce Newnam and said they were not doing their jobs.

Silver-Smith called for an investigation into the operations of the police department, and said, "I don't want to have any more police officers hurt because of lack of supervision."

He also said Hodgkins was "not performing," and "afraid to do his job." He said Hodgkins should be looking into problems in the police department.

His outburst came after Commissioner Phyllis Newnam made the motion to extend Hodgkins contract for two years.

The personnel committee, which Mrs. Newnam chairs, was to have met in February to evaluate Hodgkins. At a work session in May, Mayor Margaret Broadwell objected to the across-the-board pay increase for Hodgkins and asked about his evaluation.

Mrs. Newnam said at the meeting the personnel committee had met and decided to recommend an extension of his contract.

The motion passed in a 4-1 split with Silver-Smith dissenting.

Board honors Finance Officer

The town board unanimously voted to award Finance Officer Julia Ketchum with six framed Jerry Miller prints to show its appreciation for her efforts with the town budget and to recognize her for receiving a national award for the fifth year in a row.

Mrs. Ketchum received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers' Association, a national organization.

It is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. The town must submit an application for the award and meet stringent specifications to receive it.

It is the fifth year in a row that Morrisville has received the award.

Local company donating labor for fire station work

Crowder Construction Co. will have an "employee workday" and spread some stone at Fire Station Number One off Aviation Parkway on Thursday, July 3, at no cost to the town.

The company, located off N.C. 54 in Morrisville, approached the town about donating some construction work.

The town will supply the materials. Crowder will do some grading and spread the stone. The project is needed to help with drainage.

"Crowder construction has completed their first 50 years of business and to celebrate, will give a day back to the communities that have helped us succeed during the last century," said Candy Mastin, office manager of the Morrisville office.

The company, based out of Charlotte, also has offices in Bristol, Tenn., and Spartanburg, S.C. The Morrisville branch has been in business 10 years. Five or six employees will work at the fire station.

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