

Transit Assistant Steps Up, Plunges Into Director Job

By TRICIA BARRIOS
Staff Writer

The new interim transportation director for Chapel Hill says he is already tackling his new duties, even though he has not yet officially taken over.

Scott McClellan, the administrative analyst for the Department of Transportation since December 1986, was named interim director March 24 after Transportation Director Bob Godding last month announced plans to retire.

Town Manager Cal Horton said McClellan was the best choice for the interim position.

"Based on my personal knowledge of him, I think he's well-qualified to serve as the interim director," he said.

"He's the senior management position after Bob."

Before joining the Chapel Hill Transportation Department, McClellan spent almost nine years working in the Rail and Public Transportation Division at the Virginia Department of Transportation.

During his time with the Chapel Hill

Transportation Department, he was involved in the daily management of the town's transit system, which serves 3 million annual passengers.

McClellan said that although the promotion did not officially take effect until Friday, he was already plunging into his workload.

"Some of the work is coming my way," he said.

"But I've been here 13 years, so I'm pretty plugged into our department. I know how it works. So the transition hasn't been that hard."

McClellan said he was expecting to tackle budget issues in his new interim position.

He said planning for transit services was another major issue he planned to undertake.

Horton said the permanent director's position was open for application now. He said the position would be filled within the next two to three months.

He said the prospective director would have to meet a list of requirements, the primary one being at least eight years of experience in transit operations, personnel supervision and man-

agement.

"To put it in a nutshell, experience in a manager's operation similar to ours (is necessary)," he said.

Besides this qualification, applicants must also have the equivalent of an appropriate bachelor of arts degree and possess the skills to communicate successfully.

Depending on qualifications, the starting salary ranges from \$55,016 to \$80,294.

The new director will manage a department consisting of about 152 employees with a budget of more than \$6 million.

McClellan said he was undecided about competing for the director's position.

Bill Stockard, assistant to the town manager, said Horton would make the final decision.

"It'll be a thorough review process," he said.

"I would estimate it wouldn't be immediate."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Cost Crux of Contraception Debate

Some N.C. legislators fear insurance coverage of birth control will be met with a corresponding rise in rates.

By ALICIA GADDY AND
JESSICA CHISM
Staff Writers

While the N.C. legislature has already passed a law requiring insurance companies to cover contraceptives, the debate rages on in other states.

Women's health advocates claim that covering the male-potency drug Viagra without covering birth control is unfair.

But opponents of the measures say requiring insurance companies to cover anything, including birth control, raises premiums.

Alaska, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, Utah and 13 other state legislatures all considered requiring birth control coverage this year.

But similar bills have recently been defeated in the Utah legislature.

A divided N.C. General Assembly voted last year to require insurance providers to fund birth control. Bill sponsor Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, said the N.C. bill was one of the first in the country and would ease the financial burdens of women's health care. "It will

reduce out-of-pocket costs for women," she said.

"Women pay considerably more than men for health insurance, and a portion of that is contraception."

Insko said mandatory insurance coverage for Viagra meant birth control should also be insured.

"(Birth control not being covered) is a form of discrimination, although not malicious, it was still discriminatory," she said. Insko said Viagra's success in insurance backing helped pave the way for birth control to become insured.

"The coverage of Viagra absolutely made it easier for this bill to pass," Insko said. "It gave us a solid argument."

But not all legislators thought insurance coverage should be easily mandated. Sen. Virginia Foxx, R-Alleghany, said N.C. insurance costs grew as required coverage extended. She said this could be the case with birth control.

"Every time we add requirements to the insurance coverage, we drive up the cost of insurance," she said.

Despite this controversy, insurance agents said much of coverage was in the hands of employers and individual insurance buyers.

Commercial Insurance Planning salesman Terry Moore said birth control was usually an option in group health insurance sales.

"Most of them either cover them or

have it as an option," he said.

Moore said that if the state legislature mandated insurance coverage of birth control, companies would raise their rates to compensate.

"Any time the legislature tells a company what it has to cover, that's just going to pass the cost on to you and I."

Republican Bryan Holladay, a member of the Utah House of Representatives, said Utah legislators opposed contraceptive insurance on both moral and practical grounds.

"We had a bill that proposed having insurance cover birth control, but it never got very far," Holladay said.

He said many voters in the predominantly Mormon state had religious problems with birth control and would not back the bill.

"Utah is a relatively conservative state, and I don't think this bill will ever get very far," Holladay said.

He said Utah legislators often did not like to require insurance companies to cover specific drugs.

"Birth control does interfere with religious beliefs, but the main problems are with the mandate," Holladay said.

"Even if mandates save money for people in the long run, they are never very popular."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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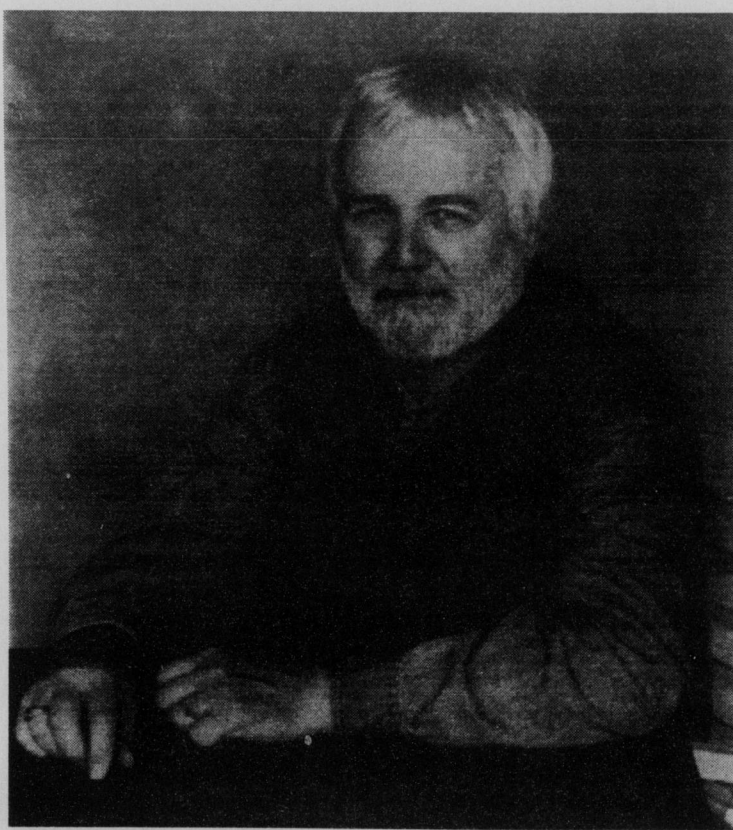
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Two-Time Pulitzer Prize nominee
Winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship, O. Henry and Best American Short Story Award, UNC-Chapel Hill Class of 1967

Public Reading

Tuesday, April 4, 7:30 p.m., Memorial Hall
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Sunday, April 2

Screenings of *Affliction*, (Academy Award Winner for Best Supporting Actor James Coburn), at 7 p.m. and *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997 Cannes Film Festival Winner), at 9:30 p.m., Carolina Union Theatre, Frank Porter Graham Student Union

Monday, April 3

Discussion of fiction with Russell Banks and UNC-CH faculty panel Dey Hall, Toy Lounge, 3:30 p.m. and

Screenings of *The Sweet Hereafter* at 7 p.m. and *Affliction* at 9:30 p.m., Carolina Union Theatre.

Thursday, April 6

Discussion of screenwriting and adapting novels to film with Russell Banks and UNC-CH faculty panel at 2 p.m., Kresge Commons Room (downstairs), James M. Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence, Graham Memorial

Morgan Writer-in-Residence sponsored by the Department of English and made possible by a gift from UNC-CH alumni Allen and Musette Morgan of Memphis.

For more information, call 919-962-4283, or www.unc.edu/depts/english/news.html.

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