

A monthly newsletter published  
by the Office of the Mayor  
for City of Memphis Employees

April 2004

## Letter From The Mayor

### *Everybody all aboard the new light rail!*

The Memphis Area Transit Authority's (MATA) newest light rail line opened last month. Known as the Madison Avenue Line, it unites Downtown Memphis with the Medical District. Vintage trolley cars are providing service for the next few years until the line can be extended to the Memphis International Airport. Once the final leg of the line is completed, modern light rail vehicles, such as those used in most major U.S. cities, will be used.

To celebrate the launch of the new line, MATA offered free rides on the Main Street, Riverfront and Madison Avenue trolley lines for a week following the grand opening. The celebration

featured music provided by the U.S. Navy Band Mid-South Brass Ensemble, the Overton High School Jazz Band, and the Downtown Elementary School Chorus. Several city leaders were on hand to praise MATA and the other entities that made this transportation gem a reality.

According to MATA president Will Hudson, the opening of the new two-mile link marks a major accomplishment for our city. "This new light rail is a big step in our quest to build a regional light rail system that will assure our citizens fast, reliable and convenient transit service to work, services, entertainment, and religious destinations throughout the 21st century," Hudson said.

MATA's light rail focus now is on finalizing government funding for the proposed portion of the rail line that will run from the Medical District area to the airport. This extension will provide service to all three major employment centers in the Bluff City.

If you haven't taken a ride on the new trolley line, get on board! Our city is moving full steam ahead!



Mayor Willie W. Herenton



MATA General Manager Will Hudson announces the grand opening of the Madison Trolley Line.

# DIVISION NEWS

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### The “Super Fair”

For the first time ever, City of Memphis employees are invited to a benefits and health fair all rolled up into one! This “super fair” will be held April 15 at The Cook Convention Center in the Steamboat Room from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Employees will receive health screenings, along with valuable benefits information such as pharmaceutical, medical counseling, financial planning and much more! Representatives from AAA Auto Club also will be on hand with membership information.

Door prizes will be awarded and refreshments will be available. Contact Bobby Coney at 567-6761 or Rolandria Dunlap at 576-6460 for more information.

## GENERAL SERVICES

### Welcome home

Vehicle Service Center employee George Gibson returned home to Memphis in February after serving a year of active duty as a Sergeant First Class for the U.S. Army. He was stationed in Ft. Leonardwood,

Missouri, where he received the Army Achievement and Commendation Awards.

During active duty, Gibson was responsible for training Army and Air Force personnel on driving, safety and maintenance of military vehicles. These responsibilities were a perfect match as Gibson has served the City as a wrecker service operator for many years.

“We missed him while he was on duty and are very happy to have him back,” said Vehicle Service Center Interim Administrator Pat Robinson. “He is a very reliable employee.”

Special thanks to Gibson for admirably and safely serving his country. *Welcome home George!*

## PUBLIC WORKS

### 42 years and counting... WOW!

What motivates a person to work for the same employer for 42 years? Let’s see... maybe it’s the fun of driving a large truck in tight, congested areas. Perhaps it’s the delight of working in hot and humid or cold and wet weather. Or, maybe it’s the pleasure of cleaning up trash week in and week out.

These scenarios may not sound very motivating to some people, but fortunately for the City of Memphis, hundreds of hard working



*Crew Chief Baxter Leach (left) receives congratulations for 42 years of service from Supervisor Sammie Sanders.*

employees accept, appreciate and endure these conditions and perform these thankless duties each day for many years.

Upon closer examination, the one common factor long-serving Public Works employees share is dedication. One such dedicated employee is Baxter Leach. Mayor Willie Herenton recently recognized Leach for his many years of service in Solid Waste Management.

“Working for the City is the best job I could have,” Leach said. “I get along well with my coworkers and supervisors. I thank God for allowing me so many years with the City.”

Leach began his career in 1963 as a crew person at the Scott Street Solid Waste Facility and was soon promoted to brush truck driver. In time, he learned and earned the position of crew chief at the Bellevue Solid Waste Facility, a responsibility he continues to fulfill today.

*Congratulations Baxter!*



*George Gibson and his son George Jr.*

**MAYOR'S  
RECOGNITION OF  
SERVICE CERMONY  
3RD QUARTER RECIPIENTS**

**40 YEARS**

**Parks Services**

*William Springfield, Jr.*

**Public Works**

*Baxter R. Leach*

**35 YEARS**

**Parks Services**

*Ned Douglas, Jr.*

*David Fentress*

**Public Works**

*Joseph Borgard*

*Billy R. Seay*

**30 YEARS**

**Engineering**

*Charlie W. Ayers*

*Eddie Johnson*

*Abraham Pirtle, Jr.*

**Fire Services**

*Sidney P. Minton*

*William Pleasant, Jr.*

*Fred H. Walton*

**Parks Services**

*Robbie Ann Banks*

*Joyce T. Fletcher*

**Public  
Services and  
Neighborhoods**

*John E. Hunter*

*Charles L. Moragne*

**Police Services**

*Raymond Baker*

*Jerry W. Bouchillon*

*Joyce L. Garner  
Willie C. Greenwood*

*Willie L. Lemons*

*Ruth Ann Murray*

*Mary Joyce Sherrill*

*David F. Stevens*

*Ottis W. Stewart*

*Armer J. Torrance*

*Leslie B. Wright*

**Public Works**

*Curtis E. Gordon*

*Willie R. Harris*

*Teddy P. Hubbard*

*Roy L. McFadgon*

*Vessie L. Pirtle*

*Doristine Standard*

*William L. Vester*

**25 YEARS**

**Engineering**

*Clark W. Odor*

*Richard D. Pumroy*

**Housing and  
Community  
Development**

*Monice Davis*

**Police Services**

*Thomas E. Arnold II*

*Rosetta Collins*

*Charles Andre Cox*

*Brian Fitzgerald Dwyer*

*James A. White*

**Public Works**

*William T. North*

**YOU'RE AWESOME!**

Congratulations to the following *Awesome!* employees for providing outstanding customer service to their fellow employees and the residents of Memphis.

Rubin Abram

*Monica Mcmorise*

*Deborah Banks*

*Voretta Mhoon*

*Patricia Black*

James Neville

*Ronald Brister*

*Keith Richardson*

*Terri Brown*

*Iris Robertson*

*William Burstyne*

*Eric Sabatini*

Linda Gales Carter

*Paula Sealander*

*Darlene Cooper*

*Curtis Simmons*

*John Covey*

*Ernestine Smith*

Cassandra Davis

Barry Stroud

Richard Dellinger

James Stroud, Jr.

Lawrence Fraser

*Isaac Stout*

Elbert Geeter

*Dana Taylor*

*Bonnie Good*

*Nathaniel Taylor*

*Arch Harris*

Dee Thornton

*Michael Hezeau*

Alex Tyler

Jeffery Jones

*Belinda Vinson*

*Jenice Mays*

Audrey Williams

*Mark Mcguire*

*Italicized names are electronic ...Awesome recipients  
Feb. 12, - Mar. 11, 2004.*

“You’re Awesome” forms are available in the Quality and Professional Development Service Center (Rte. #66, 4225 Riverdale Road), and from Quality Coordinators/Trainers and Division Directors.

# INSIDE INNOVATIONS!

## THE LESTER COMMUNITY CENTER: A LIGHTHOUSE FOR BINGHAMPTON

**T**here is more going on at the Lester Community Center than hoops, games and afternoon snacks. There is phonics, spelling and reading... oh my!

“When it is time to read, the kids get so excited,” said Linda Campbell. A mother and self-described homemaker with two college degrees, Campbell dedicates her Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to teaching phonics and improving the literacy of the Binghampton neighborhood children. “My dream is to one day have a reading café for the kids — sort of like the ones at the big bookstores,” she said.

Although Lester Community Center is no swanky commercial bookstore, it is a haven for kids who need monitoring, homework assistance and recreation after school. “We are one of the only community centers I know of that has a volunteer-driven phonics and



*Quatteria Robinson, 7, and Tevin Smith, 9, get to work in their after-school reading class.*

tutoring program,” said Walter Casey, the center’s director and basketball coach. As with most centers, Lester provides neighborhood youth an athletic outlet by sponsoring several basketball teams, as well as other recreational activities.

### THE JOY OF READING

When neighborhood children come to the center after school, they cannot toss their schoolbooks aside to hit the basketball court or the game room. They must hit the books instead.

A couple of years ago, Park Services implemented the Community Enrichment Opportunity program or CEO. According to Casey, from 3 – 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, the kids must have quiet time to study. “If they don’t have any homework or don’t bring it with them, that’s OK,” Casey said. “We give them some — whether it is some math problems or a reading assignment, we give them *something* to do.”



*Lester volunteer Linda Campbell spends about 10 hours a week helping neighborhood children improve their reading skills.*

During a time when scholastic achievement scores are lagging, the Binghamton community has rallied around its kids. Thanks to volunteer support, the center has the only Read to Achieve program in any public community center in the city. “It started out with the staff helping the kids — calling out their spelling words, checking their homework, or whatever else they needed,” Casey said. “Then, the neighborhood church got involved and now it sends 10 volunteers a week to help the kids with phonics and reading,” he added.

On Tuesdays, children sit in a large room and pair up with a volunteer for their afternoon reading tutorial. On one Tuesday afternoon, the youngest volunteer, still wearing his school uniform, arrives early. “He is so enthusiastic about the program that he began setting up the room on his own,” Casey said of 12-year-old volunteer Jeremy Russell. “He also is an exceptional reader,” Casey added.

“I like to help people read because they can use it throughout life,” Jeremy said. “You will always need to read something,” he added.

According to Casey, the Read to Achieve program is based on the each one teach one concept. “Kids do better in smaller classrooms,” Casey said. “So, when it’s one-on-one, you’ve got to accomplish something.” According to Casey, the children’s progress comes along little by little. “They are all baby steps. But, you make a lot of baby steps and eventually you’ve got a giant leap,” he said.

Casey says the volunteers are the backbone of the reading program. “It doesn’t matter how old you

are, it is how patient you are,” he said. One patient volunteer is Stephanie Chamberlain. A self-described stay-at-home-mom, she listens to Jalen Winston, 8, read a book and helps him with his pronunciation. According to Casey, she has been coming to the center consistently for the past two years, even while pregnant and after the birth of her baby girl. “Being able to help (the children), and giving them one-on-one time is important to me,” Chamberlain said.



*Stephanie Chamberlain tutors Jalen Winston, 8, weekly.*

Marissa Payne volunteers each week as a NAACP representative. “These kids really need this attention because many of them arrive at kindergarten not knowing the basics (of reading),” Payne said. “And, they don’t get a lot of attention at home,” she added.

Briauna Lovin is five years old and attends the tutoring sessions each week. “I can only read three-letter words and sometimes the words on my homework are too big,” Briauna said. According to Payne, Briauna is making progress. “I go over the word list at the beginning of each book and that really helps her read better,” Payne said. “Many times kids skip over the word list and go straight to the story, but I have found it to be a very good teaching tool.”

Payne is not the only one who realizes the value of phonics. Every Tuesday and Thursday, children as young as 4-years-old are drilled on how to pronounce vowels and consonants. “I was shocked when I realized that many of the kids could not read,” said Linda Campbell of her first experience at the center five years ago. “Today, our preschoolers are reading before they



*Jeremy Russell, 12, tutors 7-year-old Deanna Watts.*

*continued on the next page*

get to school,” Campbell said. “If they learn the skills, rules and clues to learning and reading, it is so easy for them once they get to school — they just take off,” Campbell added. When asked why she volunteers, her answer was simple: “I want to instill in them the joy of reading.”



*Marissa Payne listens to Briana Lovin, 5, read.*

## A LIGHTHOUSE

Local businesses have taken notice of Lester and provided financial support. Cummins Engine recently donated \$4,400 that will be used to purchase new equipment for the center’s gameroom. Pepsi America donated \$2,000 for the annual basketball shootout. Additionally, Lester has the largest computer lab of any community center in the city with 30 computers — most of which were donated by Cummins and other businesses.



*Three-year volunteer phonics tutor Shelia Rhodes says she loves being a role model for the children. "If you can read, you can do anything."*

Besides being a recreational and educational site, Lester is a place of refuge. “If someone has a problem, we won’t leave until we can help or find someone to help,” Casey said. According to Casey, the center’s

success shatters the Binghampton stereotype. “The center contradicts the common belief that Binghampton is not a good place to live and grow up,” he said. Casey says the center serves a crucial purpose to the neighborhood’s children, seniors — everyone. “There would be no where for them to go, no role models, no help,” he said. “This is an absolute safe place for (the residents) to grow physically, spiritually and emotionally,” he added. “This place is a lighthouse in this community.”

## WALTER CASEY: LESTER DIRECTOR AND COACH

Walter Casey is to the Lester Community Center what Tom Landry was to the Dallas Cowboys football team in the 1970’s. As Landry was for years the only coach the Cowboys ever had, Casey is the only person to ever head the center. He joined Park Services in 1968 as a lifeguard and swimming instructor and was hired to run the Binghampton Community Center when it opened in 1980. Over the years, he has seen hundreds of children come and go — even go on to college and succeed.

“I grew up here and still go to church here,” Casey said. “I love the Binghampton community — it will always be my home.” His commitment to neighborhood youth is unmistakable. A Memphis Amateur Hall of Fame inductee and coach of three boys’ basketball teams and two girls’ teams at the center, Casey regularly leads practice sessions with all five teams at once!

Coaching kids ranging from age 6 to 12 years old is a labor of love for Casey. So much so that during basketball season he works on his days off. “I have coached for 30 years and I still love it,” Casey said. Besides working on his days off, Casey has had perfect attendance as a City employee for the past 30 years!



*Walter Casey*

## CQI CORNER

### The City Celebrates Annual Secretaries Day!

City Secretaries... get ready for a day of learning, motivation and fun when you attend the Annual Secretarial Seminar! The seminar will be held **Thursday, April 22** at the DoubleTree Hotel, 5069 Sanderlin Avenue, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This year's theme "*Secretaries... Keys to Excellence*" focuses on and acknowledges how vital secretaries are to Memphis City Government.

Quality and Professional Development (QPD) has scheduled four dynamic local speakers. Each speaker will share personal and career experiences to provide leadership tools designed to assist you in becoming more effective communicators and contributors in the workplace.



Sheila C. Bentley

To start the morning off right, Sheila C. Bentley of Bentley Consulting will provide informative, practical and entertaining information on how to rev up your coworkers. Her topic is *Secretaries as Motivators!*" Bentley has 20 years of consulting

experience in communication. She lives in Shelby County.

Tina Birchett is president of Birchett and Associates, Inc., publisher of Grace Magazine, and founder of Sisterhood Showcase. Her topic, "*You Can Do It, Too!*" will inspire you to improve your life



Tina Birchett

personally and professionally.

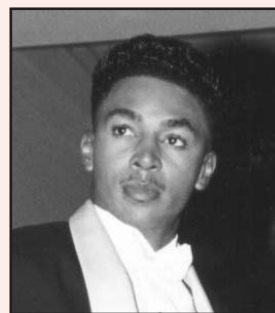
Ever heard the old adage 'Image is everything!?' After

lunch, color expert for Chanel® cosmetics Oscar M. Anderson will teach you how to make the most of your image through

the proper use of color. His topic,

*"Secretaries... Step*

*into Color,*" will emphasize the significance of color and how you can use it to visually create harmonious effects.



Oscar M. Anderson

The final speaker on this special day is Toxis St. Clair, an Administrative Officer for the United States Marshals Office for the Western District of Tennessee. Her topic, "*Secretaries Communicating with Confidence,*" will empower you to handle any tough situation by teaching you strategies and techniques for removing anxiety and gaining self-control.



Toxis St. Clair

The stage has been set for an exciting day of fun and learning. This event also is the perfect opportunity to meet and talk to local professionals who have excelled in their careers! Sign up today by forwarding a completed registration form to QPD via fax at 576-6455 or via interoffice mail (route #66). For more information, call QPD at 576-6424.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## FIREFIGHTER'S RIVER CHALLENGE ON MUD ISLAND!

**April 10** — Bring your family and friends out to enjoy a day of fun on Mud Island! Local firefighters will compete in relay races to raise money for the Firefighters' Burn Center. The Memphis Fire Department BBQ team will fire up the grill to fill your bellies. Antique fire trucks will be on display and The Memphis Choppers will host a motorcycle rally with door prizes and awards for best show bike. Monorail ride is \$2.00 and entry to the park is free. Call Melanie Napier at 576-7237 or Chip Sneed at 489-2676 for more information.



## SPRING PLANT SALE AT THE LICHTERMAN NATURE CENTER

**April 16 - 17**— What's native, homegrown, environmentally responsible, and makes your backyard come to life? More than 250 species of plants offered at Lichterman Nature Center's Spring Native Plant Sale, that's what! This year's Spring Native Plant Sale features beautiful, unusual wildlife-friendly plants native to the Mid-South. Browse through rows of plants that butterflies flock to, including native hibiscus and butterfly weeds, and non-native salvias. Also, enjoy an incredible assortment of hard-to-find woodland flowers along with hyssops and violets, perennials, biennials, annuals, shrubs, trees, and grasses cultivated on site by Nature Center staff and volunteers. Plant Sale hours Friday, April 16 are 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., and Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 767-7322, ext. 121.



## CELEBRATE EARTH DAY WITH PUBLIC WORKS

**April 22 is Earth Day!** The Public Works Division will celebrate all week with various activities, including a free mulch giveaway during the week of April 18 - 24. Also, THE CURBSIDE CASH GIVEAWAY II recycling contest will be "RE"introduced citywide. Log onto the City's Intranet site at <http://cityintranet> for more information.

## CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOODS' NEIGHBORFEST 2004!

**April 24** — The Center for Neighborhoods will hold the 17th Annual Neighborfest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

at Overton Park. This annual festival celebrates the unique qualities and accomplishments of Memphis and Shelby County neighborhoods. It also is a day to acknowledge agencies and businesses that support local communities. The day will include the best in local entertainment, games, and children's activities. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Chanda Brandt at 526-6627 or via email at [chanda.brandt@cityofmemphis.org](mailto:chanda.brandt@cityofmemphis.org).



*City Pride* is a monthly newsletter published by the Office of the Mayor for city employees. Deadline for submissions is the first week of the month prior to the next issue.

Special thanks to the following contributors: Andy Ashford, Felecia Boyd, Chandra Brandt, Walter Casey, Karen Chunn, Dan Hope, Melanie Napier, Paula Polite, Berlinda Williams, and Glen Yaun.

Editor: Daphne J. Thomas

Comments, suggestions and submissions are welcome. Call Daphne J. Thomas at 576-6006.