

SNOW
FROM PAGE 1

To get ready for the storm, crews from Chapel Hill and Carrboro public works departments joined with Department of Transportation crews in laying down brine.

George Seiz, Carrboro's public works director, said the brine mixture helps prevent the snow from binding with road surfaces, making removal easier.

Both towns have adopted a strategy of keeping main roads as clear as possible through the storm to keep them passable for emergency vehicles and any public transit that is still operating.

After clearing out the main arteries, crews focus on secondary roads. Many of those throughout southern Orange County did not see substantial clearing until Tuesday.



PHOTO BY NICK HOFFMANN

Seiz said warmer weather also made a contribution to the work.

"Mother Nature played a key role with mild temperatures, and started melting off the snow pretty well," Seiz said.

Crews from both towns worked 12-hour shifts to keep efforts moving around the clock.

Richard Terrell, Chapel Hill's operations manager for public works, said as of Wednesday there were no serious trouble spots, though crews

were still spreading sand and pushing slush away in some areas.

"We worked around the clock, including last night," he said on Wednesday. "As of 3:30 today, we went back to our normal schedule."

Asked how the crews held up, Terrell said there was some expected wear and tear, and days of working 12-hour shifts took their toll. "I can tell you they were happy to get back to their regular schedule today," he said.

Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt said town crews did a good job of getting the town back in shape, especially getting bus routes ready. The town operated with a limited schedule over the weekend, but did run its Tar Heel Express routes to UNC's basketball contest against Virginia at the Smith Center.

Kleinschmidt said he has not heard much in the way of complaints about the cleanup and road clearing.

"The only concern people have raised has been about sidewalks," he said. Clearing the walks is often more difficult. And while early on it was hard on pedestrians, most sidewalks are in better shape as of Wednesday, the mayor said.

Carrboro sidewalks were a key focus after the downtown thoroughfares were cleared.

Cliff Collins, owner of Cliff's

Meat Market, said he appreciated the effort in getting the central business-district sidewalks cleared.

"They were out there working really hard, and I really want to thank them for that," he said Tuesday evening.

With cold temperatures and a sprinkling of ice pellets creating a crust on top of the snowfall, the storm proved to be a godsend for anyone with an interest in sledding.

Southern Community Park and Carrboro High School were hot spots for sledding, where anything from tarps to cardboard to actual sleds were pressed into service.

Despite heavy enthusiasm and slick conditions, UNC Hospitals only reported one sledding-related injury. In all, about a half-dozen weather-related injuries were treated at the Emergency Department,

most due to falls.

As the roads cleared, trash and recycling crews returned to work. Commercial trash haulers also returned to the streets to pick up a growing backlog of trash at area apartment complexes.

Now town officials and a wary populace are keeping an eye on this weekend's weather. It may have been a balmy 50 degrees on Wednesday, but colder weather is heading this way. Precipitation is in the forecast; depending on temperatures, that could mean ice pellets, rain or snow.

"We're watching it," Terrell said. "You have to. In this area, you just never know."

Updates on service schedules and weather warnings will be posted to *The Citizen's* MILL blog at carrborocitizen.com/mill

Kate Griesmann contributed to this report.

News Briefs

Part of Fordham Boulevard will be closed

A northbound lane of U.S. 15-501/Fordham Boulevard will be closed intermittently for about four months during the construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Fordham Boulevard between Manning Drive and Old Mason Farm Road.

In addition, the outside left turn lane from Manning Drive to Fordham Boulevard will be closed during these times. Traffic will not be altered during UNC home basketball games and other special events. Crews will be working on the project between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

News offices sold

The News and Observer Publishing Co. announced the sale of its Franklin Street headquarters for its *Chapel Hill News* and *Durham News* newspapers to Scott Maitland. Maitland, owner of Top of the Hill restaurant and brewery plans to turn the former press room into a liquor distillery.

He paid \$2.15 million for the 0.8-acre site, which includes about 10,000 square feet of office space and 10,000 square feet of warehouse space. Maitland will lease office space to the *NC&O* for its western Triangle news and advertising staff.

MIDWIFE
FROM PAGE 1

Her first experience came while she was a student, with the Amish community in Lancaster, Pa., and her journey has now brought her to practicing home births on her own in Carrboro and surrounding areas.

Home birthing with a midwife is an alternative to what 99 percent of women in the U.S. choose to do — have their babies in a hospital.

"The women that tend to choose home birth are women that are really committed to child birth and feel for themselves that their home will be the place they feel the safest," O'Connell said, "and for a woman in labor, that's huge, because it can really impede a woman's progress in her labor if she doesn't feel safe."

Both Means and Hensley say that trust and relationship building were primary considerations in their decisions to opt for a midwife.

"One of the benefits of having a home-birth practice is getting to know your clients, and they do really need to get to know you, because it's such a professionally intimate relationship," O'Connell said.

She said not all women are suited, mentally and physically, for home birthing "If you're committing yourself to a home birth, you have to be committing yourself to a natural childbirth," she said.

O'Connell is required to meet certain qualifications and requirements to ensure home birth is appropriate and safe for a woman. She is also required to have physician backup.

Safety concerns keep many women from choosing to home birth: If something goes wrong during delivery, there might not be enough time to transfer the woman to a hospital.

In fact, this happened when O'Connell witnessed her first home birth. It did not scare her away. O'Connell has now attended more than 800 home births, and only once — during the first one she ever attended — has something gone terribly wrong.

"If anything, it gave me a stronger sense of respect for the birthing process," O'Connell said of that first experience, "and that bad things do happen, but they happen to women in hospitals just as much, if not more."

Means said she wasn't comfortable telling friends and family about her decision to go with

a home birth, out of concern that they'd be scared for her safety.


"I knew they'd flip, she said. "We were going to tell them afterward."

Hensley said she didn't have any fears, and her friends and family didn't either.

"Once you have one pregnancy, they sort of know what you need, when you need it; so I think they trust the woman to know when something is wrong," she said. "The only thing I'm worried about is that I'll have the baby before anybody gets here, because Deb lives in Carrboro and I live in Raleigh."

Which helps explain why O'Connell will be hard pressed to find vacation time in the near future — she's always on call. It's a bit different than her days in hospitals; but it's her passion and her calling. Vacations will have to wait.

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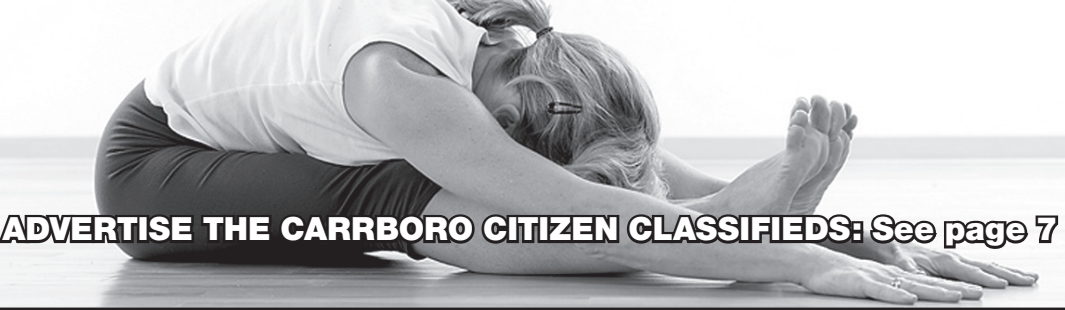
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