



CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

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MCCF President Dean Ahmad congratulates Community Hero Frank Vratarić at the Federation's annual reception for elected officials. (More pictures of the reception begin on p. 8.)—Photo by Frances Eddy

Commission On The Future

—by Stan Schiff, Planning and Land Use Chair

The County Council's new President, Blair Ewing, has outlined his agenda. Among the issues Mr. Ewing considers top priority for Council action, transportation and alleviating congestion are the most difficult to solve. He has expressed confidence that by next fall, the Council will have "firm, clear and creative short and long range recommendations for action to reduce congestion" before it from the task force working on the

In This Issue ...

Commission on the Future	Page 1
ExComm Meeting Minutes	Page 3
Storm Water Management	Page 4
Referendum Reform	Page 5
Redistricting Committee Appointment	Page 7
Bylaws Amendments	Page 7
Transportation Policy Report	Page 8
Holiday Reception	Page 8
Renew Now	Page 10
District 5 V.P. Election	Page 10
From the President	Page 10
Officers and Committee Chairs	Page 11
Agenda for Delegates Meeting	Page 12

Transportation Policy Report. On economic development, his emphasis is on stimulating and supporting small business.

Additional issues reflect Mr. Ewing's abiding concern about pressing social needs. His strong support for education and alleviating the shortage of affordable housing will surprise no one. "We must dramatically expand available housing if we are to find places for the poor, whose numbers are growing, and for those with disabilities and mental illness, as well as seniors with low income." He also expressed concern over the difficulty in finding locations for facilities needed to accommodate the growing demand for child care, elderly care, hospitals, clinics, etc. Recognizing the bitter battles that communities and advocates for those facilities have fought, Ewing said he would ask the Council to establish a task force to "make specific recommendations about new policies on how to decide on the location of such community serving uses and facilities."

President Ewing stated, "Health services, especially mental health and primary care, are inadequate and inaccessible for many." He called for building a comprehensive primary care system through public/private partnerships. He also urged the Council to initiate an effort to formulate a comprehensive environmental policy, one that "would bring together all aspects of environmental policy in a single document, harmonizing its elements, filling gaps and eliminating contradictions."

The county's Transportation Policy Report is a work in progress. The Commission on the Future, however, has identified the issues it regards as of greatest concern to the county. Taken together, these three projects could conceivably thrust the County into a period of intense policy formulation obliging citizens and public officials to confront a daunting array of social, economic and ultimately, political problems, many of which are related to each other.

A number of questions emerge from these three different sources. What kind of economic development policy shall we pursue? How will we meet our budgetary commitments to education and the design of education programs that will make fluent English speakers of a remarkably diverse student population? How will we supply sufficient housing at prices lower income families who provide vital services to the community can afford if, in fact,

we choose to do so? What measures will be proposed to effectively address the monumental transportation problems with which residents contend daily? In sum, what combination of actions will it take to safeguard and improve the County's cherished quality of life? And will we be able to ensure that the benefits of whatever gains come from such improvements are fully shared –by the less affluent as well as the affluent?

JANUARY'S PROGRAM: THE REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE

The 17 members of the Commission on the Future under the chairmanship of Dr. Robert E. Parilla, recently retired President of Montgomery College, eschewed crystal ball gazing. Instead of trying to conjure up a vision of the county in some distant future they focused on the major trends of the past decade or two and framed their advice to the Council "on dealing with today's issues so that they do not become the problems of tomorrow." Different readers may read this report in different ways. Undoubtedly it will stimulate debate. It is aggressive and, depending on one's point of view, thought-provoking—or just plain provoking. It is unabashedly oriented toward promoting strong growth. The rationale for growth is the need to expand the tax base. And the need for the expanded tax base comes with a familiar justification: to provide the services and amenities that "define our quality of life". This is a legitimate point of view, but the reasoning is not shared by all. In fact, the report stages a bit of retreat from its own thesis. "If we find that we are unable to provide community facilities, we should adjust the pace of growth to a level we can realistically service."

Perhaps the most provocative statement comes in the discussion of transportation. What will it take to solve the "transportation crisis?" The Commission's reply: courageous leadership on the part of elected officials. And what is the prescription for courage? "There will always be environmental considerations and citizen opposition; neither can be used as an excuse for inaction."

On education the Commission strongly recommend a commitment of extraordinary effort with the required resources to ensure that "every student {is able} to read and write English at grade level or above throughout the educational experience." Literacy for

children and adults must be the universal goal." Special efforts need to be made to assist children from lower income and non-English speaking families.

Another major area of interest was the Commission's call for a comprehensive housing policy with "measurable targets" for affordable housing. The report called access to affordable housing the most critical housing issue confronting the County.

Space limitations preclude our being able to give readers more than this cursory summary of the report's findings and recommendations. But our Executive Committee decided to schedule programs over the next few months to encourage discussion of both the commission's report and the progress of the Transportation Policy Report. At our regular monthly meeting on January 8, we will have a presentation by two or three of the Commission's sub-committee chairs with discussion to follow. In addition, we are planning a three-hour Saturday morning forum discussion in late March or April with participation by commission members. Members of the County Council will be invited and encouraged to attend this public forum.

Ex-Comm Meeting Minutes Dec. 14, 2000

–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

The MCCF president, Dr. Dean Ahmad, called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm. He noted that several apologies were received from members of the executive committee who had schedule conflicts.

Dr. Charles Wolff offered extra copies of the December newsletter. A motion to add an agenda item on Membership & Audit Report was offered by Dr. Jorge Ribas was adopted. The amended agenda was adopted.

The minutes of the November 16 meeting were adopted as printed.

The treasurer's report was deferred, in the absence of the treasurer.

Dr. Ribas noted the re-opening planned for the Belt School as a middle school. Dr. Ahmad agreed that the ExComm needs to schedule a discussion about

that matter and also consider the matter of the Jaime Escalante Charter School. It was agreed that **there will be further discussion concerning the MCPS policy on sales of school properties.**

Dr. Ahmad suggested wording for a letter to be sent to the County Attorney concerning campaign material that was circulated by an employee union on county property on county time on the premise that this was union business, as mandated by the delegates in November. He said that the County Council should be asked to examine the ethics and legality of the actions and the appropriateness of the documents circulated. Mr. Skinner noted that state law forbids such activity and that the County Attorney should be asked to furnish a copy of the agreement. On a motion by Mr. Dick Kauffunger, **Dr. Ahmad's proposal was referred to a subcommittee of Dr. Ahmad and Mr. Skinner for further study.** Mr. Skinner recommended that the Inspector General be requested to investigate the matter.

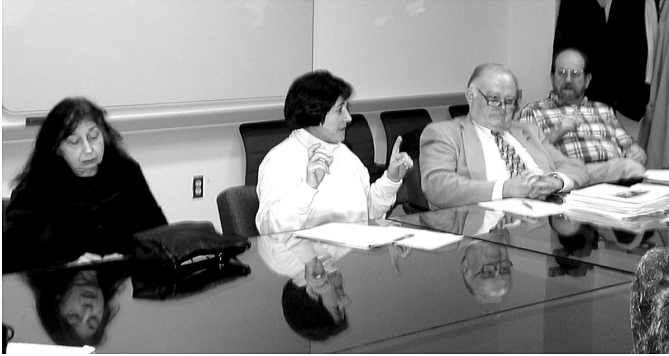
The president nominated Samira Hussein, an activist in the county school system, as Community Hero for January. He said that she is an advocate for minorities who has been recognized for her work by the school system, the PTA, and the County Executive. After considerable discussion, Mr. Schiff's motion was approved to **table the nomination until a complete report is submitted.**

On behalf of the Social Committee, Ms. Taylor sent a request that, since employees of the Aspenwood Community may not accept gratuities, MCCF should give each one a monetary gift. They all worked on the weekend to serve the reception and worked beyond normal hours. After some discussion of the legality of gifts as substitutes for gratuities, Mr. Skinner moved that the **president appoint a committee, Ms. Taylor as Chair plus three other members, to look into the matter.** Motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Skinner asked a question to be directed to the Education Committee: Who is working on the charter school issue? Dr. Ahmad agreed to call Mr. Astrove to deal with the question.

Mr. Ribas directed congratulations to the Environment Committee on Park and Planning's adoption of the Legacy Open Space. He thinks that

MCCF should ask Park and Planning to develop a really comprehensive policy on environment that would bring together the many aspects that are related.



–Fifa Northrup makes a point at Decembers ExComm meeting as Jeanne Goldstein, Bill Skinner and Dick Kauffunger listen.

–Photo by I. Dean Ahmad

In respect to Program, Mr. Schiff stated that January is too soon for a program on the Transportation Policy Report (TPR) and suggested delaying that issue and having a forum on the Commission for the Future Report, as it would be an excellent topic for discussion, as well as for arousing public awareness. There was general agreement on postponing the TPR program and also for considering organizing a forum on the Commission on the future. Names of various officials were offered as a Chair. Dr. Jean Goldstein moved that **the subject of the January meeting be the Commission for the Future Report, and that the speakers include Messrs. Parilla, Hussman, Steckel, and Robinson.** Motion passed unanimously.

The Capital Budget will be the topic of the February meeting; Ms. Dennis will check this out with Mr. Lapinski, Public Finance, & Utility Chair. Ms. Dennis offered as the March meeting topic, or a forum on it, the TPR. Mr. Schiff said that he could chair a meeting, and possibly a forum, as well, with the forum to be organized for some time after the meeting, perhaps April or later. Dr. Wolff moved that the **MCCF program in March be on the TPR and that a related forum be proposed for some later time.** The motion passed by voice vote with two dissents.

9:25 pm – MCCF recording secretary Richard Zierdt arrives, relieving MCCF corresponding secretary Winnifred Klein, who took the minutes up till then.

George Sauer moves, Peggy Dennis seconds, that the **MCCF endorse Yale Wiesburg for redistricting commission.** He ran Steve Silverman's campaign.

Bill Skinner moves a **substitute motion that a three-person committee interviews the candidates.** The motion to substitute passes. Jean Goldstein, Cary Lamari, and George Sauer will serve on the committee. The motion passes on voice vote.

Membership committee. Jean Goldstein. Membership will hold a meeting soon to call late members. Jorge Ribas has created a list of 134 organizations and 68 individuals paid through December of this year (2000). He believes that some organizations have not been properly credited. The Audit Committee will look into the matter. Bill Skinner moves that **MCCF apologize to all organizations, if any, that paid their dues but were mistakenly reported as delinquent.** Jean seconds. Passes with one abstention.

Bill Skinner moves that the **MCCF place support for storm water management fees as opposed to a tax, including application to non-profits and government users, on the January delegates' agenda, with a favorable recommendation.** Seconded. Motion passes on voice vote.

Meeting adjourned 9:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary,
with thanks to Winifred Klein for taking 75% of the meeting's minutes.

Storm Water Management

–by William Skinner

The Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee of the Montgomery County Council will meet on January 18 to revise legislation proposed by the County Executive to deal with the daunting task of equitably funding the maintenance and construction needs of the county's storm water management facilities. Deadlines are looming for the county under federal and state requirements based on the Federal Clean Water Act. Bill 28-00 contains a controversial proposal for maintenance by the county government of most private storm water management facilities once these facilities are brought up to certain standards. The revisions to be considered by the T&E Committee will primarily deal with the

controversy of how to finance this major new program.

Councilmember Leggett, who chairs the T&E Committee, has expressed his displeasure with the assumption of Bill 28-00 that ongoing funding would come from County General Revenues. A new user fee which would finance county maintenance of all storm water management facilities as well as storm drains, was the preferred option of a Work Group created by both the County Executive and the County Council. The existing one-cent storm drain tax would be eliminated. The Work Group (on which I served as a lay person representing the Montgomery County Taxpayers League) issued its report in November 1999. (For copies of the report: Policy and Program Options for Montgomery County Stormwater Management telephone Ellen Scavia—at the Department of Environmental Protection 240-777-7748.) County policy regarding who should bear responsibility for maintaining storm water management facilities has varied greatly over the past 30 years. In some cases, the burden falls on the taxpayers, who through the general fund, support facilities that benefit a discrete group of private property owners. In other cases, private property owners, often a common ownership community, have to maintain facilities which benefit their neighbors. The variability in funding sources has resulted in community inequity. It is usually the newer communities who are paying for maintenance of storm water management facilities which were required as part of county approval to build while older communities either do not have storm water facilities or benefit from those built and/or maintained by county government.

The User Fee concept, which is widely employed by other jurisdictions, assigns a share of costs to landowners based on each property's contribution to the amount of impervious surface for the property type. Revenue generated by the fee would be used to clean and repair public and private storm water conveyance and storage facilities throughout the county. Before the county would assume responsibility for maintenance of an existing storm water management facility, that facility would have to meet the county's current standards. This recommendation ensures that all property owners pay a fair and reasonable rate including non-profit entities who are usually exempt from paying a tax to the county and do not pay for county services received. The fee is also intended to capture funding

from the many federal agencies in Montgomery County who do not pay county taxes but can pay fees at their discretion.

The proposed storm water fee reduces reliance on general fund monies, and, by providing credits, encourages reductions in storm water quantity as well as improvements in quality controls. The Working Group's recommendations also ensure that the county will comply with its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment as required by the Federal Clean Water Act.

The community equity issue also arises in regard to municipalities who can exempt themselves from a countywide fee because of their sovereign powers. (The Takoma Park is currently levying a user fee to finance the maintenance of storm water management facilities within its boundaries.) It is hoped that municipalities will recognize the fact that storm water cannot be controlled by political boundaries. Protecting the quality of the county's water supply and controlling the quantity of storm water runoff must be a cooperative venture involving all communities in Montgomery County.

REFERENDUM REFORM NOW

—by Dick Strombotne, District 2 Vice President

Now that the election is over, it is time to start working to fix the referendum process in Montgomery County. When citizens here want to challenge a new law enacted by the County Council and County Executive, they have an opportunity to bring the issue before the voters in the next general election through the referendum process. By the same token, citizens wishing to change some aspect of how our government works may bring the issue before the voters by placing a charter amendment on the ballot. It is much more difficult to get a referendum on the ballot than a charter amendment.

To get a referendum on the ballot, we must collect valid signatures of five percent of the registered voters (currently about 22,000 voters) and present them to the Board of Elections. Half of these signatures must go to the Board of Elections within 75 days of the legislation's enactment date and the

other half just 15 days later or within 90 days of enactment.

By contrast, the number of signatures required to put a charter amendment on the ballot is 10,000. Of the three charter amendments on this past November's ballot, one, question C on term limits, was put on by Robin Ficker after collecting the necessary 10,000 signatures. Mr. Ficker has been successful in putting charter amendments on the ballot in many recent elections. On the other hand, civic groups that object to some bills enacted by our government have had great difficulty in getting their issues onto the ballot for a referendum vote.

Some examples are the Clarksburg jail, speed bumps, the smoking ban, domestic partners, etc.

The two main factors that make it so much easier to petition for a charter amendment than for a referendum vote are different requirements for signatures (10,000 vs. 5% of registered voters) and the absence or existence of time limits. There is no time limit for obtaining signatures for a charter referendum, but there are 75 day and 90 day requirements for signatures for a referendum.

A bit of historical information helps to shed light on these differences. The state constitution sets the number of signatures required for a charter amendment as twenty percent of registered voters or 10,000, whichever is less. In the early 1900's when the state constitution addressed this point, the idea was that it should be more difficult to put a charter amendment on the ballot than to challenge new laws passed by the County government. Back then, 10,000 represented twenty percent of the registered voters in Baltimore County. In Montgomery County with a much smaller population, it would have taken four times as many signatures to get a charter amendment on the ballot than the number required for a referendum. Over time, with the large growth in Montgomery County's population, the situation has reversed.

The remedy for this situation is to change the number of signatures needed for a referendum to the 10,000 needed for a charter amendment. It requires a charter amendment to make this change. The Clarksburg Civic Association is on record as unanimously endorsing a similar proposal. Richard Strombotne has proposed this change to the Montgomery County Charter Review Commission and to the County Council in both 1998 and 2000. The County Council

did not accept the recommendation. The Montgomery County Charter Review Commission prefers an alternative that toughens the requirements for a charter amendment. For this to happen, the state legislature would have to propose a constitutional amendment, the voters across the state would have to approve it, then a conforming amendment to the Montgomery County Charter would have to be approved by the county voters. This sequence is likely to fail at each step because voters have no reason to support it.

The failure of the County Council to give the voters the chance to vote on referendum reform gives other parties the opportunity or obligation to take the lead in bringing this issue to voters in the 2002 general election. What group could be more appropriate to take the initiative in this matter than the Montgomery County Civic Federation? As noted, one member organization, the Clarksburg Civic Association, is already on record in support. MCCF has a record of successfully sponsoring charter amendments on good government issues; for instance, ethics reform in 1998. This is likely to be a very popular issue, with potential support not only from civic activists but also from environmental groups, labor unions, good government groups and others who have fundamentally disagreed with recent laws passed by the County Council. When referendum reform is in effect after 2002, County Council members will likely pay more attention to citizens' objections to their proposals than they do now.

At the January 8 membership meeting, the delegates will have the opportunity to discuss and vote on a motion to put MCCF on record in support of referendum reform. The draft resolution being proposed follows:

- **Whereas**, the number of signatures needed to bring legislation passed by the County Government to referendum was originally one-fourth of the number needed for a charter amendment and now has increased to 2.2 times the number needed for a charter amendment, and
- **Whereas**, the original public policy was to make it easier for citizens to challenge new laws passed by the County Government than to change the Charter, and

- **Whereas**, with the growth of population it has gotten much harder to challenge new laws than to change the Charter, and
- **Whereas**, with the number of signatures needed to bring a charter amendment to the vote is 10,000 and the number needed for referendum is five percent of registered voters, and
- **Whereas**, many Montgomery County citizens have attempted to bring new issues to referendum for consideration by the voters and have been frustrated by the extreme difficulty of doing so, and
- **Whereas** the Montgomery County Civic Federation has a membership that represents a large share of the county's citizens,
- **Therefore, be it resolved that** the Montgomery County Civic Federation will support and work for a charter amendment in the November, 2002, general election to reduce the number of signatures needed for a referendum to 10,000 from the current requirement of five percent of registered voters.

We strongly urge all delegates to attend the January 8 delegates meeting to discuss and vote on this very important resolution. An informed and active membership is as crucial to our mission as an informed and active citizenry is to the health of our civic life.

Redistricting Commission Recommendation

*–by Jeanne Goldstein, Chair
Special Committee for Evaluation of Candidates
for the Open Position on the Redistricting
Committee*

On Monday, Dec. 18, 2000, we interviewed the two individuals whose names had been given to the Civic Federation for its recommendation. Both are fine candidates, with strong experience as advocates for the rights and needs of community residents. We

carefully deliberated their particular backgrounds as well as their views on a number of concerns which we consider important in regard to the work that the Commission will undertake.

One of the candidates has had more extensive experience pertaining specifically to the process of redistricting, and impressed us as more knowledgeable about its ramifications. i.e., not merely about the goals of redistricting, but of how best to achieve them. For the majority, this background was the conclusive factor in our decision. We recommend that Yale Weisberg be appointed to the Commission.

Bylaws Amendments Proposed for Approval

–by I. Dean Ahmad, President

Two Bylaws amendments are on the agenda for final approval at the January session. First, that Article 6, Section 6 be amended by adding the words "Notice of the special election shall be placed in the newsletter one month ahead of the meeting at which the special election is to take place" as a new second sentence as follows:

6. *Vacancies.* The unexpired term of a vacancy in an elected position shall be filled by a special election at a Regular Meeting. **Notice of the special election shall be placed in the newsletter one month ahead of the meeting at which the special election is to take place.** The position will be assumed upon election.

Second, that Article 10, Section 5 be amended by adding the words "in May" as follows:

5. *Membership Committee.* This committee shall conduct membership drives, evaluate eligibility of applicants for membership, bill for (**in May**) and collect membership dues, transmit to the Treasurer all dues collected with identity of member and year, maintain the membership records, prepare Delegate and member mailing labels, and perform such other tasks as may be assigned by the Executive Committee.

Transportation Policy Report

—by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

In establishing the Transportation Policy Task Force, the Planning Board gave it 15 months to come up with consensus recommendations on solving the County's massive traffic problem. The time is short, the task huge. The subject is highly complex. Those familiar with the subject and appreciative of its complexity recognize there is no silver bullet, no panacea. Economic development, housing, land use, and peoples' personal attitudes and conduct all are interrelated with transportation. But complexity is not the only factor. Fiercely and tenaciously held views, often in conflict, are another major factor.

Numbering 38 members, the Transportation Policy Task Force first assembled in June and has spent the past several months mainly in putting together so-called sketch scenarios. These are differing versions or scenarios of how the County's transportation system and land use patterns might look in 2025 and 2050. The scenarios are based on a combination of how external forces (such as the economy, and the environment) might allow it to develop and also on ideas various members have on how they would like it to develop. The Task Force is now working on more fully developing the sketch scenarios along with a series of measures of effectiveness that will be used to evaluate the scenarios. At this juncture, the object is to evaluate different combinations of transportation improvements and land use changes to determine how well they satisfy the transportation demand.

The Task Force has an ambitious public involvement program. The choice of the word "involvement" was deliberate. It is intended to indicate that the group wants to hear and listen to what the public thinks, both about the problems and the possible remedies. During late November and December, a working group of the Task Force conducted four focus group discussions as well as four community workshops. The information generated in these outreach sessions is being synthesized and will be reviewed for possible incorporation into the formulation of the scenarios and upcoming discussion on policies.

In late January, the scenarios will be presented to the Planning Board for critical examination and

comment. The scenarios will be computer modeled and the results evaluated during February and March. Also during this period, the Task force will begin to focus on identifying and analyzing a variety of policy measures.

Once the evaluation of the initial scenarios is completed, there will be a second round of public involvement activities. The Civic Federation plans to hold a Saturday morning forum similar to the one on the Future Commission report in late April.

Enthusiastic Attendance At MCCF Holiday Reception

—by Myrna Taylor, Social Committee Chair
with Photos by Frances Eddy

The Civic Federation members and officers enjoyed hosting a reception for elected officials on December 3, 2000. A total of 100 people attended the reception. Twenty-one of those were elected officials. This was a great time for elected officials and their constituents to get to know one another and discuss a variety of issues.

Bill Skinner, past MCCF President introduced our current President, Dean Ahmad, who welcomed everyone and introduced the speaker.



Charles Wolff and Dick Wilder

Isiah Leggett, Councilmember and former Council President, gave a short speech about the future of the County and the important work that the Civic Federation does. He encouraged the Civic Federation

to grow and to expand to include people and groups that are different from ourselves, and to share what we have learned about how to work with legislators and other officials. Jorge Ribas, past MCCF President presented Mr. Leggett with an award for being an effective legislator and positive influence on the community.

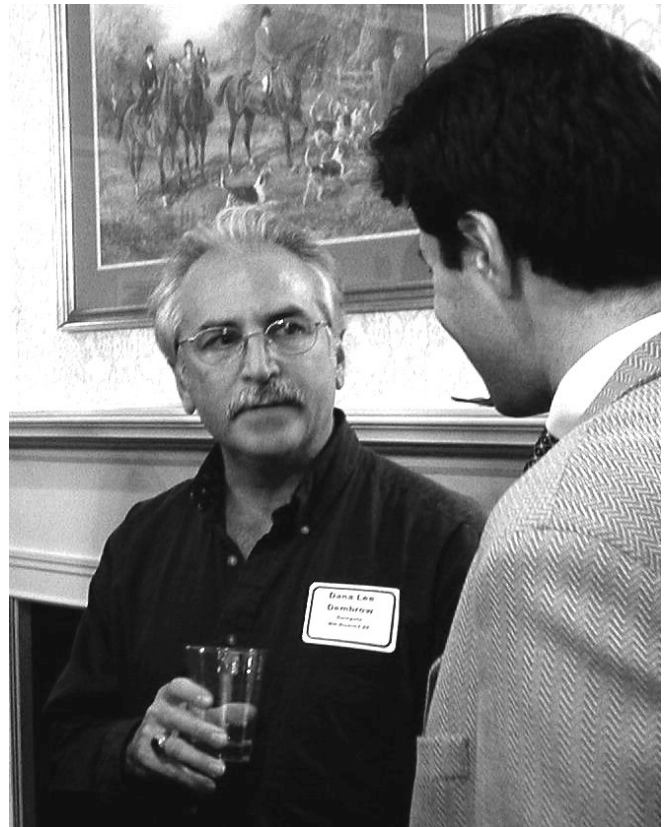


Community Heo Frank Vrataric

The highest point in the evening was the presentation of various awards to our very own Frank Vrataric for his untiring efforts on behalf of the community over the years. Frank is admired for his relentless activism, and it was wonderful to see the very people with whom he was relentless honor him for it. Senator Chris Van Hollen presented a Senate Resolution to honor Frank on behalf of the Maryland Senate; Delegate Dana Dembrow presented a House Resolution in Frank's honor on behalf of the Maryland House of Delegates; and new Council President Blair Ewing presented Frank with a County Council Citation. Dick Kauffunger, past MCCF President, presented Frank with a framed print of Norman Rockwell's Freedom of Speech. There was a great deal of applause and camaraderie while these awards were being presented to Frank.



Councilmember Blair Ewing and MCCF President Dean Ahmad



Del. Dana Dembrow

Four members of the Montgomery County Council were present (Phil Andrews, Blair Ewing, Isiah Leggett and Steve Silverman). Four members of the Board of Education were present (Sharon Cox, Nancy King, Walter Lang and Pat O'Neill). William Hussmann (Chairman, Parks & Planning) and his wife came to the reception. Our State's Attorney, Doug Gansler was there. Two Maryland Senators (Christopher Van Hollen and Leonard Teitelbaum) and six State Delegates attended (Bill Bronrott, Dana Dembrow, Henry Heller, Carol Petzold, Tod Sher and Joan Stern). Michael Buccino represented Delegate Peter Franchot's office, and Craig Zucker represented Congressman Albert Wynn's Office. Neal Potter, former Montgomery County Executive, attended. Many others called with regrets. Delegate Jean Cryor was out of town, Councilmember Marilyn Praisner's mother was ill, and Congresswoman Connie Morella had a previous commitment. Delegate Adrienne Mandel sent an e-mail with best regards for everyone, and with regrets that she could not be at the reception because of a family commitment. We really appreciate all these officials who took the time to get out and talk with their constituents in person, and we wish them a successful Year 2001.

At the end of our program, MCCF President Dean Ahmad wished everyone a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Peaceful Ramadan, a wonderful Winter Solstice, and best wishes for any group or religion he might have inadvertently missed!



Tony Czaikowski and Ex-President Jorge Ribas

I'd like to give a big thank you for the volunteers who helped with the reception. Charles Wolff, Peggy Dennis and Jeanne Goldstein helped welcome people and check them in. Jeanne Goldstein did double duty—she also contributed the punch as she has for many years. Thank you Charles, Peggy and Jeanne. And a big thank you to Lois Sherman for being the liaison with the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House of Delegates and the County Council in connection with the Frank Vratatic award.

Wishing you all a very happy and successful 2001!



Ann Vratatic and Jane Wilder

Renew Now!

Please help us to have a successful year by renewing your association's membership now. Use the application form enclosed in last month's newsletter (or download a copy from www.montgomerycivic.org) to renew your association's membership to the Civic Federation. The Civic Federation is your means to effectively enhance and protect the quality of life in Montgomery County. Send you renewal to: Steve Howie, P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871.

District 5 VP Election

—by I. Dean Ahmad, President

The vacancy in the District 5 Vice Presidency has not yet been filled and is on the agenda for January. I still have heard from neither anyone who wants the position nor from anyone who knows someone who definitely wants the position. If you are a Civic Federation Delegate who lives in Councilmanic District 5 please call me and let me know that you are willing to serve. Nominations are allowed from the floor. Here follows the Bylaw on filling vacancies:

6. *Vacancies.* The unexpired term of a vacancy in an elected position shall be filled by a special election at a Regular Meeting. The position will be assumed upon election.

From the President

Happy New Year!

It's time for another year of civic improvement, and judging from the smashing success of our annual reception for elected officials, we're all primed to go. The reception was huge success thanks to Myrna Taylor and her band of hard working volunteers (p.

2000-2001 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs

Office	Name	home	office	fax	email
President:	I. Dean Ahmad	301-951-0539	301-656-4714	301-656-4714	deanahmad@yahoo.com
Past-Pres.:	Jorge L. Ribas	301-258-1910	<not available>	301-258-1909	sfristoe@erols.com
1st Vice-Pres.:	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	same	<not available>	hotyakker@aol.com
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Stanley D. Schiff	301-530-6455	same	<not available>	<none>
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Steve Howie	301-972-2736	same	<not available>	stevehowie@aol.com
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Dan Wilhem	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com
Treasurer:	Chris Suzich	301-417-9522	same	<not available>	jcsuzich@juno.com
Rec. Secretary:	Richard Zierdt	301-881-0283	703-464-1617	<not available>	richard.zierdt@landmark.com
Corres. Sec.:	Winnifred Klein	301-654-8084	same	<not available>	w-wklein@webtv.net
Dist. 1 V.P.:	Fifa Northrup	301-984-9424	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
Dist. 2 V.P.:	Dick Strombotne	301-540-9597	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
Dist. 3 V.P.:	Myrna Taylor	301-869-4499	same	<not available>	<not available>
Dist. 4 V.P.:	Robert Creager	301-890-4326	301-918-9226	<not available>	<not available>
Dist. 5 V.P.:	<Vacant>				
Historian:	Marcella Petree	301-384-1776	same	<not available>	<none>
Newsletter Ed.:	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	same	<not available>	hotyakker@aol.com
Parliamentarian:	George Sauer	301-762-7260	same	<not available>	<none>
Public Relations:	Robert Creager	301-890-4326	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
Education:	Robert Astrove	301-340-9521	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
Environment:	Charlie Pritchard	301-593-1781	same	<not available>	erc69434@aolcom
Legislation:	George Sauer	301-762-7260	same	<not available>	<none>
Membership:	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
Pl. & Land Use.:	Stan Schiff	301-530-6455	same	<not available>	<none>
Pub. Fin. & Util.:	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	703-506-4600	<not available>	clapinsk@mcri.com
Transportation:	Dan Wilhem	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com

8). Thanks to all of them. Having Frank Vrtaric as our community hero was highly appropriate as he sets the perfect tone for this new millennium of civil society. (That's right, the new millennium starts in 2001; but we won't get into that controversy here.)

The first big issue on our agenda is an introduction to the Commission on the Future report. Although the ExComm is making plans for a Saturday morning workshop on this issue later in the spring, we thought that members would like to find out what the Commission is all about. It has not had a lot of publicity to date, but as a vision for the County's future it has wide-ranging impacts on Transportation, Land Use, Welfare, etc.

Last month I mentioned the novel effort to have a County road abandoned so that the adjacent landowner could build in the air rights over it. This resulted in a welcome call from the Friendship Heights Village Association. I was informed that a street abandonment in that area had the effect of increasing the floor space in the related project. Although no air space was utilized, County law allocates permissible floor area in proportion to land area, and the area of private roads is INCLUDED while the area of private streets is EXCLUDED. While there is no doubt in my mind that private roads

are better maintained than government roads, the increased density is a price citizens should be aware of in making their cost/benefit analysis of such proposals.

George Sauer who kindly filled in as our Parliamentarian while I conducted a more thorough search to fill the position I resigned upon election as President has graciously resigned so I can now appoint William Skinner as Parliamentarian. Bill is a past President of the Federation with a thorough knowledge of our Bylaws, and I will be asking for confirmation of his appointment from the membership at the January meeting.

I am now working on a project to assemble a list of the Federations standing resolutions. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help with this project should call me at 301-951-0539. Once I have compiled a substantial number of these (I don't intend to wait until a certifiably complete list is available) I will circulate them among interested parties to check for accuracy and significant omissions. After review by the ExComm, the final document will be entrusted to the Secretary or his designee to keep up to date and an updated copy maintained on the web site.

—I. Dean Ahmad, Ph.D.

Delegates Meeting

Monday, January 8–7:45 p.m.

First Floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building, Rockville, MD

AGENDA:

- 7:45 Call to Order, Vice Chair Peggy Dennis (presiding)
7:46 Announcements, Introductions
7:52 Adoption of Agenda
7:55 Approval of Minutes, Officers' Reports
(see Dec. '00 newsletter)
- 8:00 Program: 2001 Commission on the Future (p.1)**
- Stan Schiff (Land Use Committee Chair)
 - Javier Miyares (Commission Subcommittee Chair)
 - Barbara Steckel (Commission Subcommittee Chair)
- 8:30 Question and Answer
9:00 Old Business
- Election of District 5 Vice President (p. 10)
- 9:10 New Business
- Confirmation of William Skinner as Parliamentarian (p. 11.)
 - Redistricting Commission Appointment Recommendation (p. 7)
 - Storm Water Management Fee (p. 4)
 - Bylaws Amendments (p. 7)
- 9:35 Adjourn

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation**, a nonprofit, educational, and advocacy countywide group, was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. The monthly Delegates Meeting is open to the public and it is held on the second Monday of each month (except for holidays, July, August and December) at 8:00 p.m. in the First Floor Auditorium, County Office Building, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly. It is mailed to Delegates; associate members; news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Permission is granted to reprint any article provided proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County Civic Federation." Deadline for submissions is the last Monday of the month before publication. Attach submission to e-mail to: deanahmad@yahoo.com

Please send all address corrections to Steve Howie, P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871, 301-972-2736, stevehowie@aol.com.

Next Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2001, 7:45 p.m.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center

4805 Edgemoor Lane in downtown Bethesda

(Note: there are two entrances to the parking garage—one on Edgemoor Lane and another on Woodmont Avenue.)

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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