



CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

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Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

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www.montgomerycivic.org

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Nine of the thirty-five volunteers from the Abused Persons Program recognized as Community Heroes at the February delegates meeting.

—Photo by Winnifred Klein

Transportation Policy Review Scenerios

—by Dan Wilhelm
Transportation Committee Chair

The program at our March meeting will be a presentation by Dan Wilhelm and Stan Schiff updating us on the progress of the Transportation Policy Report Task Force. The TPR II Task Force is charged by the Planning Board to find workable solutions to the transportation challenges facing the county.

To help it understand the advantages and disadvantages of various ideas, the Task Force has developed five different scenarios for testing with a computer model. Each scenario is designed to satisfy a possible view of the way the future *may* unfold.

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The five scenarios are:

1. Fiscally Constrained. Few new roads or rail lines would be added in this scenario, either because funds are not available or the political will doesn't exist to proceed with controversial projects. The main transportation improvement is to add more buses and to create a bus-rail transit grid to support multi-destination travel.
2. Base Case. This scenario proceeds with presently approved plans as defined in existing master plans, except for the ICC between US 29 and Georgia and four of the eight planned grade separated interchanges along US 29.
3. Road Emphasis. The scenario includes most* of the roads found in the master plans, including the ICC and all the US29 interchanges, adds several more major road improvements including a Beltway HOV, another Potomac River crossing at Point of Rocks), and adds a corridor cities busway (dedicated lanes for bus).
4. Transit Emphasis. Many new transit rail lines are added, bus service expanded, and more future development is concentrated around transit stations than presently planned. This scenario includes some* but not all of the arterial and major road projects identified in current master plans.
5. Road and Transit Emphasis. This scenario has more road improvements* than scenario 3, slightly less transit than scenario 4, and land use changes similar to scenario 4.

Roads	Add 6 lane ICC in Master Plan Alignment	Extend Mid County Highway to the ICC
	Widen Muncaster Mill from MD 28 to Shady Grove	Widen MD 198/MD 28 from US 29 to Georgia
	Add new road from US 29 to US 1 along ICC right-of-way	Add HOV lanes on Beltway
	Add lanes on I-270 from Gaithersburg to Frederick	Extend Existing I-270 HOV lanes to Frederick
	Widen MD 355 to Clarksburg	Add 4 or 8 new interchanges on US 29
	Add techway from I-370 to Fairfax Parkway in Virginia (Herndon)	Add Montrose Parkway
Transit	Add buses using existing routing	Restructure bus routes as multdestination grid network and add buses
	Add Georgia Ave Busway (dedicated lanes) from Glenmont to Olney	Add Corridor Cities transit from Shady Grove red line to either Clarksburg or Frederick. Options include dedicated bus lanes, at grade light rail and grade separated light rail
	Add 2 lane busway on ICC; 4 other lanes included	Extend Metrorail from Shady Grover to Metropolitan Grove
	Add light rail on Outer Purple Line: White Oak to Wheaton, Grosvenor, Montgomery Mall and Tyson's Corner	Light rail on Inner Purple Line: Bethesda to SS, College Park and New Carrollton
	Add light rail on US 29: SS or Langley Park to White Oak, Burtonsville, and MD 216 in Howard Co	Add N. Bethesda light rail from Montgomery Mall - Options White Flint or Grosvenor
	Add busway on US 29 from SS to Columbia	Add Georgetown Branch light rail
Land Use	I-270: less jobs and more housing	Georgia Ave: more jobs
	SS: more jobs and more housing	US 29: more jobs and less housing
	Rural area: less jobs and less housing	Everywhere: more jobs and housing close to transit stations; growth continues elsewhere but at reduced levels.

The table at the top of page 2 lists the major projects that are included in one or more of the above scenarios, but not all of them. There are many other smaller projects being considered over and above those listed in the following table. * The Task Force has yet to decide which of the smaller master plan identified projects will be included in each of the scenarios.

The Task Force plans to take the results from the first round of modeling and revise them for a second round of modeling. The second set of scenarios may be variations on the above set or could be entirely different. The second set of scenarios will be based upon the results form modeling the first set, and feedback from government officials and the public.

The above scenarios are designed to be both consistent with their theme and provide information about the benefits of each individual project by comparing the results between scenarios.

Like the public and government officials, the 38 member Task Force is composed of people with strongly held views for and against all the various individual projects. The hope is that the Task Force can reach a consensus by the summer of 2001 on what steps need to be taken, be they road projects, rail projects, bus changes, land use changes currently defined in master plans, and policy changes. The computer modeling is intended to move people from subjective opinions to objective opinions based upon

what works and doesn't work. It is hoped that insight gained by the Task Force will also help move government officials and the public to a similar consensus.

Once the Task Force presents its report, there will be other steps required assuming the decision makers agree (Planning Board, Executive, Council, Governor, Legislature, as the case may be). Some recommendations may require funding from the County and/or State, others may require changes to master plans as they are amended over the next decade, and others may be implemented by the appropriate agencies within the County. Although the Task Force is looking out to the year 2050 to determine direction, the final consensus projects (once they are determined) would be phased in over time. If the decision makers agree, parts of some projects not already planned for implementation could be implemented within a few years.

The Task Force web site (www.Movemontgomery.org) is available to learn more about Task Force activities, to ask questions or to provide your comments to the Task Force. We suggest you periodically review this site as the information is updated regularly.

Delegate Meeting Minutes February 12, 2001

—by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order by Dr. Dean Ahmad, MCCF president, at 7:56 pm. This is the 725th session of the MCCF.

Announcements. Everyone present introduces themselves.

Agenda. New business: Peggy Dennis: National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Bob Creager: instant runoff. Richard Zierdt: impact tax; Piggy-back tax. Tom DeGraba: Non-political, elected Park & Planning Director.

Minutes from January's delegates meeting are accepted.

Community Hero Award. Victim Abuse Volunteers. There are 35 volunteers, some of whom have been with the program 17 years. Staff, about 6 in number,

are recognized. Then volunteers are individually named; 9 are present. Some Q&A followed: how big the problem is, etc. Police get about 8000 911 domestic calls per year. About 2500 restraining orders issued per year. Also, child abuse is reported in about 75% of the cases. Police may be somewhat reluctant to get involved. Alcohol and drugs are often involved. Some men are victims.

Program. "A Region Divided." Chuck Lapinski. Scheduled guests could not be in attendance this evening. Some policies encourage residential migration from some neighborhoods, which causes much excessive turnover. The Dulles Access Road was built without nearly the environmental concerns that I-270 had to surmount. Study available on www.Brook.edu (Brookings Institution).

Public Utilities. Chuck Lapinski. Chuck explains the electrical distribution and costing methods, and the California situation. Western states have built few new power plants in 10 years.

Old Business.

Storm Water Management Fee. George Sauer moves postponement of this issue. Seconded. Passes unanimously on voice vote.

Bylaws Amendments. **Article 6, Section 6 be amended by adding the underlined words 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.

Passes unanimously on a voice vote.

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.

Passes unanimously on voice vote.

New Business.

Proposed bylaw change. Peggy Dennis. **Article II. Change the last sentence of Article II. Membership, paragraph 2, Representation by adding the underlined words: The maximum number of representatives shall be four, and the president of the association shall be the first representative named unless the president elects to appoint another association member to serve in the president's place.** This would allow a member association to appoint a delegate other than its president. Moved by Charles Wolfe, and seconded. Dean Ahmad makes the point that if a different person is appointed, that person will receive the MCCF Newsletter, and not the president. Motion passes unanimously on voice vote.

Referendum Reform. Dick Strombotne. **Move to reduce the number of signatures needed for a referendum to 10,000, down from the current requirement of 5% of registered voters (currently about 22,000).** Discussion follows. Referendum may only negate what the County Council passes. Motion passes with 1 abstention.

Home Depot on Rockville Pike. Tabled until next meeting. APFO loophole explanation needed.

Dry Cleaning Institute. Lee Shipman moves **MCCF support the preservation of the building by advocating it be placed on the "historic atlas".** Seconded. Motion passes unanimously on voice vote.

NAMI - National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Peggy Dennis moves that the **MCCF strongly support NAMI Montgomery County's request for a Supplemental Appropriation by the County Council for FY01 and necessary funds in FY02.** 5 seconds. Amendment: **Add a request to the Governor requesting full state funding of mental health services.** No objection on the amendment. Passes on voice vote.

Instant Runoff Method of Voting. Bob Creager. A voting technique where voters would rank their choices for political office. If no candidate receives 50% of the vote, the lowest ranking candidates are

removed from the tally, and the process is repeated until a candidate receives 50% of the vote. Motion fails for lack of 5 seconds.

Development Impact Tax (MC Code Chapter 52, Article VII, sections 52-47 through 52-59, currently under tax rate review; public hearing to be held March 6). Richard Zierdt moved the following motion: **"The MCCF believes a suitable tax must be applied to all new development to cover the cost of all additional public services, be it for education, transportation, safety, or utilities. County law 'Development Impact Tax for Major Highways' should be revised to acknowledge that costs for public services include more than transportation alone."** 5 seconds. Passes 10-1-2.

Piggyback tax discussion. Postponed until next meeting.

Non-political Director of Park & Planning: proposed amendment to the County Charter. Tom DeGraba. Moves that the position of Director of the Montgomery County division of the Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission be an elected non-partisan position with a term of office of 4 years. 5 seconds. Currently, the director (of P&P staff) is appointed by the Planning Board, which itself is appointed by the County Council. George Sauer moves referral to the Executive Committee. Motion to refer passes on voice vote.

Meeting adjourns.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Zierdt, MCCF Recording Secretary

Ex-Comm Meeting Minutes
Feb. 22, 2001
–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Meeting called order by MCCF president Dean Ahmad at 8:05 pm.

Treasurer's Report: \$3989.65 checking, \$3556.43 savings, for a total of \$7546.08.

Audit Committee - Charles Wolff - treasurer's records are substantially correct.

Political Campaigning on County Property/Time - After receiving copies of the contract between the County and support services union from County attorney Charles Thompson, Dean Ahmad reads proposed letter to be sent to Mr. Thompson, with CC to People's Council, Martin Klauber.

Development Impact Tax - Richard Zierdt. Since this was an emergency motion passed at the February 12, 2001 Delegates meeting, Richard will write an explanatory article for the newsletter.

School Infrastructure Piggyback Tax - Zierdt will vote at the next delegates meeting that the MCCF support a 2% increase in the piggyback tax to be used exclusively to increase funding for school facilities. [see article in this newsletter]

APFO Loophole Properties. Zierdt received information from Park & Planning staff on "APFO Loophole Properties" - properties approved before 1982 - and a 23-page list of such properties. This is the category under which Home Depot was approved on Rockville Pike. [see article in this newsletter]

Awards Committee - Dean Ahmad establishes committee by appointing Bill Skinner, chair, and Jean Goldstein, with two or three additional members to be appointed by agreement between chair Skinner and president Ahmad. Ratified without objection.

Programs - Peggy Dennis.. March: Transportation Policy Review. April: Stormwater management. Electricity deregulation and utilities possibly for May .

Stormwater Management - Cleo Tavani. Discussion about stormwater management: maintenance and financing. Will organize a program to be presented at the April delegates meeting.

Land Use and Planning - Peggy Dennis for Cari Lamari and Dick Kauffunger, re: a letter criticizing the governmental interference and the politicization of the Victory Housing Project. Peggy will coordinate with Dean.

Tom DeGraba of the Willows and Neighbors Citizens Association will make a motion at the March delegates meeting that the MCCF support the office of the Director of the Montgomery County division of the MNCPPC as a publicly elected non-partisan position with a term of office of 4 years.

Meeting adjourned 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Zierdt, MCCF Recording Secretary

Return the Surplus

—by William J. Skinner

The Maryland Legislature is considering H.B. 477 that would return surplus money to the taxpayers according to a formula. Currently, after the Legislature adopts the Governor's Budget at a specific amount, there are always additional monies received by the State. This surplus was always spent by a letter budget amendment until two years ago when the budget bill required that the money be held for a legislative appropriation.

H.B. 477 would place a constitutional amendment on the ballot for the voters to adopt or reject in 2002. There will be opportunity to discuss the precise operation of the amendment between now and that election. Basically the amendment would allow a small portion of the surplus to be spent, but the bulk of the money would be returned to those who paid it.

Other states have similar return-of-surplus schemes and H.B. 477 uses the approach adopted by the voters in Oregon. I would ask the Civic Federation to support H.B. 477.

Tax bills are heard by the Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Budget Committee. Ask members of those Committees to approve the bill and send it for a floor vote.

Repeal the Whole Inheritance Tax

—by William J. Skinner

Over the past two years, the portion of the Maryland Inheritance Tax applicable to direct heirs has been repealed. The portion applicable to indirect or collateral heirs has been reduced, but not repealed. H.B. 90 would repeal the remainder of the Maryland Inheritance Tax. The primary sponsor this year is Delegate Obie Patterson of Prince George's County.

Speaker Taylor and Senate President Miller promised to revisit the repeal this year.

The offices of the Registers of Wills will be placed on a state-wide budget for the first time and any funds needed to operate those offices will be appropriated from the General Fund. There are only 11 other states with an inheritance tax. The trend to repeal these taxes started 12 to 15 years ago.

Maryland's Inheritance Tax was adopted about the time of the Civil War to pay for canal construction debt. Persons with estates under the Federal exemption amount of \$675,000 do not pay Estate Taxes, but they are still subject to inheritance taxes if they are brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, or special friends or business partners or employees who are named in wills to receive property. Therefore this bill will help primarily those with small estates pass on their property without a penalty imposed on death.

Awards Committee

–by I. Dean Ahmad, President

As required by our Bylaws, an Awards committee has been established to present the three annual awards at the June meeting. If you have any suggestions for deserving recipients, please contact the Committee Chair, Bill Skinner at 301-762-5483. Here are the relevant sections from the Bylaws:

1. Annual Awards. The Federation shall make the following awards each year. Awards will be presented with appropriate ceremony at a time and place determined by the Executive Committee.
 - a. Star Cup - sponsored by the Federation and to be awarded to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of
Montgomery County
 - b. Gazette Award - sponsored by the Montgomery Gazette newspaper and to be awarded to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County
 - c. Sentinel Award - sponsored by the Montgomery Sentinel newspaper and to be awarded to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level

2. Awards Committee. An Awards Committee to make recommendations for recipients shall be established not later than the February Executive Committee Meeting. Members shall be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Executive Committee. Notice of the Awards Committee along with a call for suggestions will be published in the Newsletter.

3. Selection of Recipients. Recipients of the awards shall be determined by the Executive Committee at its May Meeting, based upon but not limited to recommendations of the Awards Committee. Only members of the Executive Committee may be present during the selection process, and any member of the Executive Committee recommended for any award by the Awards Committee may not participate in the process.

Piggy-Back Tax: Would You Support Increasing It?

–by Richard Zierdt

I testified at a public hearing February 6, 2001 on the County Executive's proposed changes to the County budget for 2000-2001. Among several "adjustments" to the County public school system's capital improvements (additional classrooms and renovated schools, basically), he proposed delays in renovating Walter Johnson High School (Montrose Park residents, take note). The meeting was packed, with school proponents (mainly parents) testifying how badly their school needed more and better classrooms, gyms, heating and air conditioning systems, and fewer portables. One council member, Derrick Berlage, asked if citizens would support a tax increase if it went to pay for school infrastructure. Most at the meeting voiced "yes."

There simply is not enough money (currently) to support all the things our public schools need. There can be differences of opinion on what constitutes a "good school" and "good grades," but surely we can agree that decent schools should be structurally sound, and should not have crumbling walls, peeling paint, or portable classrooms.

I want to get a "sense of the MCCF" regarding taxes and education. Would the MCCF support an increase (from 2.92% to 2.98%) in the piggy-back tax (local tax for Montgomery County) IF such an increase would be used ONLY to correct deficiencies in school facilities, and ONLY if the increase added to the school facility budget, not deducted by reductions in state funding, etc? We can define what a "deficiency" is, and which facilities are meant. But the basic idea is the support of school infrastructure. I will make a motion at the March 12 delegates meeting.

Development Impact Tax: Time for a Change

- by Richard Zierdt

At the MCCF delegates meeting on February 12, 2001, an emergency motion (because the public hearing was March 6) was passed to change the scope of the Development Impact Tax (see minutes for text). Since this tax is such an important control on new development, and because of the emergency resolution, an explanatory article is in order.

Montgomery County places a tax on new development called the "Development Impact Tax for Major Highways" or simply just the "Development Impact Tax." This tax (Chapter 52, Article VII, sections 52-47 through 52-59), which applies only to Germantown and parts of the eastern county (Farmland area), is levied to pay for transportation infrastructure when new developments are built. The impact tax is a one-time-only tax that is paid by developers and passed on to the purchasers of new homes. The theory is that developers should help pay at least for some of the roads that become necessary when new developments are built. Sounds fair to me.

The problem is that roads are not the only burden placed on county services when new developments are built. Most notable are new burdens on education (with more children), safety (police, fire, etc), libraries and recreation facilities, and utilities (water and sewer, gas and electric lines). Yes, new homes pay property taxes, but who pays for the new schools that must be built to accommodate additional students? We all do. This leaves less money for existing schools, which need renovation and/or additions (and fewer portable classrooms).

The rates charged for new development come up for review every two years, and now is the time to comment. There will be a public hearing regarding the Impact Tax on March 6, 7:30 pm, in the County Office Building, across Maryland Avenue from the Rockville Library. The bill is #4-01.

The MCCF motion passed in February recommends the enlargement of the geographical scope of the tax to include all new development in the County, not just Germantown and parts of the eastern county. Clarksburg was originally included in this tax, but County Executive Duncan vetoed it.

Further, the scope of this tax must also be widened to include all public facilities and services that are affected by the new housing.

APFO "Loophole" and the Home Depot on Rockville Pike

-by Richard Zierdt

At the February 12, 2001 MCCF delegates meeting, I moved that the MCCF object to Park and Planning's approval of the Home Depot on Rockville Pike because of inadequate transportation infrastructure on Rockville Pike. Also, its approval was helped because the property is one of hundreds of "loophole" properties under APFO (adequate public facilities ordinance). In other words, some properties do not have to meet the same "adequate" facilities requirements as other ones. Some delegates wanted to learn more about loophole properties before voting, so here it is.

I talked with Ed Axler, a staff member with Park and Planning, on February 22, 2001. "APFO Loophole Properties" are properties "recorded" before 1982. Further, a Loophole Property may be "registered" or "non-registered." "Registered" properties, of which Home Depot is one, are subject to a more lenient test than standard APFO properties. In particular, a traffic impact study is required ONLY if the proposed land uses generate 50 or more additional peak-hour vehicle trips. The number of vehicle trips includes new, pass-by, and diverted trips and excludes existing trips. This language I copied from a 1997 memo written by Mr. Axler. In speaking with him however, he said that only

employee trips must be mitigated, not customer trips (!).

Here are some reasons why I object to Home Depot on Rockville Pike:

- 1) No one is going to use public transportation to shop at stores like this.
- 2) Requiring the applicant to fund intersection improvements so that the Montgomery County Conference Center can be built is counter to MCCF's long-standing opposition to that project (point 12 of the opinion approving this project).
- 3) Weekend traffic, often the worst of the week, is inadequately studied.
- 4) It doesn't pass the "laugh test." There is no way, given current traffic conditions, that a Home Depot is going to improve matters on Rockville Pike. Either we, as concerned citizens of the public interest, say "no" to projects like these (as much as we might want a "convenient hardware store"), or we lose our credibility in transportation management because we would be saying that traffic congestion is a bad thing, unless it's for something we want.

I will (re)make a motion objecting to the approval of Home Depot at the March 12 delegates meeting. The loophole situation only made the approval of Home Depot legally easier. Loophole or not, the approval of it was a bad decision. I will have a copy of the decision approving Home Depot at the meeting.

Also, the loophole law expires on July 25, 2001. Mr. Axler reports a "rush" to get projects "approved" before that date. The MCCF should be on the lookout for attempts to extend this expiration date. In fact, the MCCF may want to write its concerns pro-actively to the County Council now, before any attempt is made to change (or eliminate) the date.

ELECT M-CC/PPC THE DIRECTOR?

*—by Tom DeGraba
Willows and Neighbors Citizens Association*

In Montgomery County three major bodies, the County Council, the Planning Board and the staff of Maryland-National Capital/Park & Planning Commission dominate the land use and development process. Of these three groups, the Park & Planning staff and its Director is fundamentally important.

The staff must provide accurate information and analysis of the impact of each proposed development on traffic, environment and the adequacy of public facilities. Both the Planning Board and the County Council rely heavily on the accuracy and professionalism of the staff's analysis and recommendations when making decisions on land use and development options.

Citizen participation in the process of planning and approval for new development is obviously vital to the growth, livability and quality of life of our existing communities. It is presumed that Park & Planning staff will solicit and address the concerns of affected neighborhoods, and will be professional and unbiased in arriving at their recommendations on development proposals. In fact, developers often begin working with staff on their applications months before citizens get word of what is being considered. By the time local residents get a chance to meet with staff, the staff may have developed a pro-development bias or interest that precludes citizen's concerns from getting a fair hearing.

The Director of M-NC/PPC also has enormous potential to influence the development review process tilting the results in favor of the developer. He can assign and remove individual staffers to a given project. He can set departmental policy directing what information is provided to the Planning Board. He can even modify staff reports prior to presentation to the Planning Board. If pressure to move a project along is put on the Director by a developer or by politicians, additional bias may be created and citizens concerns given even less weight.

How do we get our Park & Planning Director? We elect the County Council, the Council appoints the Planning Board, and the Planning Board appoints the Director. This position is thus twice removed from direct citizen input. The Director is unfairly exposed to influence from those with a pro-development political agenda and from developer pressure. Moreover, the Director is accountable only to the Planning Board and the Council, and not at all to the citizens whose interests he should be serving.

It is therefore proposed that MCCF initiate a ballot initiative to amend the County's charter making the Director of the M-NC/PPC an elected, non-partisan position with a four-year term of office. This would assure citizen parity in the development review

process and provide the Director a level of protection from both political and developer influence. He would be directly accountable to the citizens for his performance in office.

The following resolution is put forward for discussion and consideration:

Be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation will support and work for a charter amendment in the November 2002 general election to make the position of the M-NC/PPC Director a non-partisan, elective position with a four year term of office.

Community Hero: Samira Hussein

–by I. Dean Ahmad, President

It is a source of personal pride for me as well as community pride to salute our community hero to be recognized at the March meeting. For years I have seen Samira Hussein struggle to advance interfaith and interethnic understanding in Montgomery County despite the prejudice against the Arab and Muslim communities to which both she and I belong. She has been undeterred by vandalism and threats. Thanks to her, Muslim children in Montgomery County no longer need to miss exams because of high holidays. Teachers are aware of the special challenges posed to Muslim students during Ramadan, the month of strict Muslim fasting, and children throughout the county have been exposed to accurate presentations about Arab culture.

Since I was a small boy I was aware that I belonged to an ethnic group that got little sympathy. Television and movies portrayed stereotypes of Arabs that would have been scandalous if any other group were the target. Yet until about ten years ago there was little outcry and none of it effective. Things have begun to change recently and Mrs. Hussein has been one of the leaders of the movement. Those who have bought into the stereotypes might be surprised at Mrs. Hussein's appearance. She wears the headscarf characteristic of a conservative Muslim woman but she displays none of the submissiveness that is supposed to go with it. A survivor of the ethnic cleansing that drove her from her village in

Palestine in 1967, Mrs. Hussein speaks plainly and directly.

In 1990 during the Gulf War, Mrs. Hussein's family became the victims of months of abuse due to the misfortune of having the same last name as the Iraqi dictator. Her children suffered both epithets and physical abuse at school, and she decided to do something about it. Although many teachers responded favorably to her out reach, she also heard comments suggesting that "maybe the Arabs do belong in detention camps." This sparked in her the determination to work beyond the interests of her own children and for the benefit of the entire community. Thus she became active in the PTA and the school system, and eventually the community at large.

Mrs. Hussein has not only organized programs for the school system, but for the general public at local libraries where adults and children have enjoyed expanding their understanding of a different culture. She has worked with many other ethnic groups, encouraging the NAACP and her own community to make common cause, participating, for example, in the multicultural partnership committee that arranged a town hall meeting on race and the media. She played a leading role in the establishment of Arab-American Heritage month in the county and is an active force in the facilitating participation of Arab groups in ethnic festivals. Her active involvement in the PTA and in interaction with the County and state government has made her a role model for other Arabs and Muslims who, until recently, have been reluctant or fearful to become involved in community or political life. The courage of this assertive and yet peaceful woman in the face violent reprisals has given others the courage to become part of the American civil society.

Mrs. Hussein has received accolades from the County schools system, from the Gaithersburg Chamber of Commerce and Gazette newspaper, and from the County government. I am pleased that the Civic Federation now acknowledges her role in promoting the quality of life in our county not only by promoting better understanding of her ethnic and religious community and encouraging their full participation in the County's civil society, but also by advancing the cause of racial harmony and seeking to improve the quality of our schools.

**"Dealing with today's issues
before they become
the problems of tomorrow."**

**ATTEND THE
MCCF WORKSHOP
ON THE
COMMISSION
ON THE FUTURE**

**on Saturday, April 7
from 9 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
3rd floor of the
County Council Office Building
Rockville.**

**Hear Dr. Robert Parilla and other
commission members, Council members,
fellow activists and speak out! Look for more
details in the next issue of this newsletter.**

Admission is FREE!

From the President

During the last few months, I have been working on an effort to organization the "standing resolutions" taken by this organization. By the time you receive this newsletter a draft copy will be up on the web site. I encourage anyone with an interest in any standing resolution to go check to make sure it has been included. Bear in mind that a standing resolution is not just any resolution that says we favor or oppose some particular bill, but a general statement about positions or procedures that is intended to STAND as our position until such time as we revise or annul it. Sometimes positions that may have been forgotten get "reaffirmed" by a fresh vote.

A judgment call was required to determine which resolutions meet the requirement for a standing

resolution and if someone thinks something has been overlooked they should let me know so we can reconsider. On the other hand, if you think we SHOULD have a standing position on something but don't, you may submit your suggestion to the Executive Committee through the usual procedures, preferably through the appropriate committee chair or through your District VP. (District 5 members may send their proposals to me or, better yet, offer to run for the position of District 5 VP!)

The problem of adequate communication with the Civic Federation has come up. This is not a new problem, but it is one I would like to do something about. Of course, this newsletter is our main organ of communication, and the official organ of record. If you see something in this newsletter that does not jibe with your understanding, then it is imperative that you contact me and/or Peggy Dennis immediately. (Or Richard Zierdt if it is something in the minutes). It is best to send it in writing (by e-mail is fine) since memories may differ about oral conversations. If you are working on a program, make sure that Peggy Dennis, our Program Committee chair knows where things stand. Update her on every significant new development, and send a cc to me. And I will try to follow my own advice in my communications to all of you.

Speaking of the newsletter, organizations that did not renew for the coming year (the grace period ended January15) didn't get this issue of the newsletter. Now that's a catch-22. Jean Goldstein and the District reps. will try to make up for it by contacting the delinquent organizations directly and I'll send them follow up reminder, but we could use volunteers to help us in the membership effort. Please call Jean and tell her that you want to help. The more of us who participate, the less there is for each to do.

I'd like to say a few words about drunk driving. The state legislature is progressing with the proposal to make stricter the alcohol blood limit while dropping the proposal to make punishable having an open container of alcoholic beverage in the passenger side of an automobile. I am concerned that drunk drivers continue to be excused from the actual damage they inflict by virtue of their inebriation. Why should a drunk driver be treated more leniently than a sober reckless driver when he causes the death of an innocent? I would like to see a bill making those who kill or maim others while driving while

2000-2001 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs

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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 Wilhelm	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>	301-984-0147	breo_@hotmail.com
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>	creager11@msn.com
Dist. 5 V.P.:	<Vacant>				
Historian:	Marcella Petree	301-384-1776	same	<not available>	<none>
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Education:	Robert Astrove	301-340-9521	<not available>	<not available>	astrove@hotmail.com

intoxicated treated with the same severity given to those would play Russian roulette with an unwary and unsuspecting victim.

There are a number of interesting issues coming up or consideration at the next meeting. Should the surplus state revenues be returned to the taxpayers by a Constitutional amendment? Should the state repeal the inheritance tax? Is a school infrastructure tax a good idea? Also motions from previous meetings on the development tax and the grandfather clause that is allowing the Home Depot to be placed on Wisconsin Avenue will be discussed. At press time, I learned that legislation that establishes a task force to investigate the consequences and extent of inefficient public lighting (Maryland Joint House Resolution 14) has been introduced. This is an issue that the Civic Fed has entertained before and may wish to take a position on again. Also the Bylaws amendment that will allow civic association presidents who don't want to come to Civic Fed meetings to appoint a substitute representative. Be there, or let someone else decide these issues.

–I. Dean Ahmad, Ph.D.

Editorial

Improving Newsletter Delivery

In response to repeated complaints about delegates receiving their Newsletters on the day of, or even a day or two after the Delegates Meeting, we are moving up all elements of our deadlines to insure that

the Newsletter gets to you in a more timely manner. Henceforth, submissions to the editor will be due at midnight on the Saturday immediately following the Executive Committee meeting. The next due date and desired word processing format information will be given in the appropriate box on the back page (p. 12) of the Newsletter.

Public acknowledgement and thanks are long overdue to that kind group of volunteers who spend the occasional evening working with Charles Wolff in the nitty-gritty hands-on work required to make this Newsletter happen. Myrna Taylor, Richard Zierdt, Cary Lamari, Jorge and Sharon Ribas, Dan Wilhelm, Chris Suzich, Fifa Horthrup and her husband, and Jeanne Goldstein help to fold, fasten, label and affix stamps to the Newsletter. Thank you so much for your kind and devoted help.

As part of the changes in due dates, these work sessions will now take place on the Thursday evening one week after the monthly ExCom meeting. I have agreed to take over from Charles the task of lining up volunteers to help with the final assembly. I would dearly love to add more names to those above so that no one is asked to help do this more than three or four times a year. If you can occasionally help us in this task, please call me at 301-983-9738 to sign up. I would especially like delegates who are less active (not members of the Executive Committee or committee chairs) in the Federation to become more active by pitching in. You really can make a difference!

–Peggy Dennis

Delegates Meeting

Monday, March 12–7:45 p.m.

First Floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building, Rockville, MD

AGENDA:

- 7:45 Call to Order, I. Dean Ahmad presiding
7:46 Announcements, Introductions
7:52 Adoption of Agenda
7:55 Approval of Minutes, Officers' Reports
8:00 Community Hero: Samira Hussein (p. 9)
8:10 Program: Transportation Policy Review (p.1)
- Stan Schiff, TPR Commission Member
 - Dan Wilhelm, TPR Commission Member
- 8:50 Question and Answer
9:10 Old Business
- Bylaw Amendment on Fed delegates (p.4)
- 9:20 New Business
- Return of Surplus State Revenue (p. 5)
 - Repeal of State Inheritance Taxes (p. 5)
 - School Infrastructure Tax (p. 6)
 - Home Depot on Rockville Pike (p. 7)
 - Election of MCPPC Director (p. 8)
 - Light Pollution (p. 11)
- 9:55 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 for the next issue 5 p.m. Saturday, March 24th. Attach submission to e-mail to: Hotyakkher@aol.com as a Word document file in fully justified 11-point Times Roman font.

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, March 22, 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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