

"Federation Corner" column  
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### **Presenting the Montgomery County Civic Federation**

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As I have been involved with the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) for several years now, it always comes as a surprise when I happen upon a county resident who does not know of the group's existence or function. For those readers who may not be familiar with the MCCF, allow me to introduce you to the organization.

Founded in 1925, the Civic Federation is the equivalent of a congress comprised of delegates representing neighborhood citizens associations from across the county, "umbrella" groups covering regions larger than single neighborhoods, other county civic groups, and also residents who are individual members. The mission of the Federation is a simple one: to maintain and improve the quality of life for current and future county residents.

The MCCF is an all-volunteer run group that holds delegates assemblies ten months of the year (September through June), usually on the second Monday evening of the month. The general public is allowed and encouraged to attend these meetings, which take place starting at 7:45 p.m. in the first floor auditorium of the County Council building in Rockville.

The ten monthly meetings held each year are composed of two parts--a program and a business meeting. The business portion of meetings is dedicated to debate and adoption of formal Federation positions on issues, and to other activities that insure the smooth functioning of the group. But the programs are usually first on the agenda. These are informational presentations during which an invited panel of speakers detail an issue confronting the county, or perhaps explain a government office or initiative designed to deal with an issue. The panel presentations are always followed by question and answer periods so that audience members can ask for clarification if needed, or seek additional information if desired.

Every so often, the MCCF has the distinct pleasure of honoring a Montgomery resident or volunteer group as a "Community Hero," in recognition of an effort undertaken to improve the lives of all who live or work in the county. When Federation does honor such a hero, it is done near the start of a monthly meeting; and the award is announced ahead of time in the group's newsletter and on its website. A complete list of Communities Heroes, dating from January 2004 to present, is available on the MCCF website.

The program topics, and indeed all activities of the MCCF, are planned and coordinated by an Executive Committee of elected officers and appointed officials: President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, nine committee chairs, several functionaries (such as Newsletter Editor and Public Relations Officer), and up to 5 members at large (with varying assignments and duties). A list of all past presidents of the Federation, from its founding in 1925 through the present, is available on the group's website.

The names of the MCCF committees roughly represent nine broad issue areas on which the county government Executive Branch and Council also focuses--education, environment, legislation (state), parks and recreation, planning and land use, public finance, public safety, public utilities, and transportation. Federation committees provide informal oversight of county government decisions and policies, offering advice and comment as necessary.

The Executive Committee also meets each month, usually in the middle of the third week of each month. But there is no summer break for ExComm members; they continue to meet and function through July and August, when the delegates have a break from monthly meetings. As Thomas Jefferson opined, "the price of democracy is eternal vigilance."

As a complement to its activities the MCCF publishes ten issues of a monthly newsletter each year. Issues of the Federation News are released roughly near the first of each month in which a delegate assembly is scheduled (September through June). The newsletter contains information on topics of interest, details of the program scheduled for the upcoming meeting, the text of resolutions planned for a vote, and the minutes of the general assembly and Executive Committee meetings held during the previous month. The newsletter is a great way for members of the public to keep informed about the MCCF, and all past copies dating from September 2000 to present are available on the group's website.

As another way of honoring outstanding contributions toward sustaining or improving the quality of life in the county, the Civic Federation hosts an annual banquet at which three awards are bestowed. The Star Cup is awarded to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service. The Wayne Goldstein Award is given to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County. And the Sentinel Award, sponsored by The Montgomery Sentinel newspaper, is presented to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. A complete list of all past award winners is available on the MCCF website.

Finally, the Civic Fed hosts an online website, [www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org), which contains a wealth of information about the MCCF, past entries of this Federation Corner column, and a wide variety of topics that impact the lives of those who live, work and play in Montgomery County. I encourage you to make sure that your neighborhood association is a member of the Civic Federation. There is a "How to join" option on the site menu to take you to a webpage where you'll find a brief explanation of the group and can download a membership application. You can also follow us on our Twitter page: [twitter.com/MCCivicFed](https://twitter.com/MCCivicFed).

I hope to see you all at our upcoming MCCF meeting on September 8, when the topic for our program will be "Deer Management."

*The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect formal positions adopted by the Federation. To submit an 800-1000 word column for consideration, send as an email attachment to [montgomerycivic@yahoo.com](mailto:montgomerycivic@yahoo.com)*