



# CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation

Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

721th Session

September 2000



George Sauer, Peggy Dennis, Steve Howie, and Jack Sando examine maps of the proposed Holton Arms School access road

—Photo by I. Dean Ahmad

## Mandatory Conservation Design for Agricultural Land

—by James R. Dougherty, J. Dougherty Co.

As the corridor communities evolve from bedroom communities into employment centers, pressure to push residential development into the agricultural reserve increases. Land once considered too remote is now within a short commute to jobs and shopping, increasing the demand for residential lots in the upper county. Thirty percent of all the residential subdivision activity in the reserve has occurred in the last twelve to eighteen months.

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From 1980, when the Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space was adopted, thru 1998, there were 8,304 acres of land subdivided into residential lots. There are currently over 3,000 acres of land in various stages of the subdivision process at the Park and Planning Commission. The properties now being subdivided represent twenty percent of the remaining large landholdings in the agricultural reserve.

84% of the land in the agricultural reserve is already subdivided into parcels less than one hundred acres in size. This more than adequately serves the need for specialty and boutique farming operations and the estate housing market.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee in their 1995 study *“Future of Agriculture Study for Montgomery County, MD”* stated on page 11, *“The major reason assigned by farmers for their failure to make profits are:*  
41% – *'scale of agricultural operation is too small to be profitable'*  
23% – *'land values'*.

*“In view of the principal cause cited (operation too small) by 41%, we assume some farmers also meant they were economically precluded from increasing the size of their farms because of “land values.”*

The current method of subdivision exacerbates this problem of scale and threatens the ongoing economic viability of farming not only for the landowner who subdivides but also for the farmer who seeks to farm operation expansion.

The problem is not that the land is being subdivided; the problem is the size and the location of the lots that are being developed. The subdivisions that are occurring and have occurred in the past create large, non-farm, residential lots in the middle of the county’s prime agricultural soils and along the rural rustic road frontages. This is the exact opposite location envisioned by the area master plan.

If the subdivision process continues on an “as is, voluntary compliance basis” without the proposed mandatory zoning amendments, what will be preserved is land that’s left over, the steep slopes,

flood plains, and poor quality soils, not our best agricultural land.

The existing Rural Density Transfer Zone, law as written and administered has not, cannot, and will not preserve agriculture and open space.

The zoning amendments will not prevent landowners from developing their property to the full allowable yield. It will give them the tools to create better subdivisions that are less land consumptive and enhance the probability that full yield will be achieved while preserving productive agricultural land for the future.

Without the mandatory conservation design zoning amendments, there is little hope that the reserve will survive the escalating residential development pressure being placed upon it.

The proposed amendment will provide the tools the landowners need to obtain full allowable lot yield and preserve the greatest amount of agricultural and open space land.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Delegate Meeting Minutes</b> <b>June 12, 2000</b> <i>–by Susan Sellers</i></p>
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**M**eeting called to order at 7:45 PM by Dr. Jorge Ribas, MCCF President, 720th session of the MCCF.

Announcements: There will be a conference on July 14 and 15 at the Waldorf School of Baltimore, “Inspired Teachers, Motivated Learners: Enlivening Academics through the Arts.”

Introductions were made and the roll was checked to confirm that a quorum was present.

Agenda Changes: Add emergency resolution re: Ivymount School expansion. Add emergency resolution re: Development of 850 Hungerford Drive. Add emergency resolution re: Algebra. Motion to amend agenda to move award scheduled for 10 PM to be given at 8:00 PM with other awards. Proposed agenda approved as amended.

Minutes from the May meeting accepted.

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Annual Awards Ceremony: 2000 Annual Star Cup presented to Stan Schiff, John M. Robinson, William Green, George Barnes, Peggy Dennis, Norman Knopf, and Virginia Sheard. The Annual Gazette Award was presented to Doris P. Penico. The Annual Sentinel Award was presented to Sharon Constatine. A Life Membership Award was presented to Jorge Ribas. Charles Lapinsky was awarded the 1992 and 1996 Annual Star Cup Award.

Community Hero Award: MCCF President Jorge Ribas presented the award to Ike Leggett member of the Montgomery County Council, for defending the rights of citizens to be heard.

Program: Affordable Housing. Burke Mason of Telesis and Ralph Cole from the Woodside Manor Tenants Association presented information about the proposed sale of Woodside Manor to a private developer and the efforts of the tenants, aided by Telesis, to exercise their Right of First Refusal and purchase the complex. Mr. Mason discussed the obstacles to tenant purchase of the building. The tenants have now filed a lawsuit. The Montgomery County Right of First Refusal statute will be expiring soon and the county will spend a year studying whether to continue this law. A committee is now being formed to review the law. Ralph Cole asked for the support of the MCCF in the efforts of the tenants to purchase Woodside Manor. Dick Kauffunger moved that: **The Montgomery County Civic Federation strongly support the extension of the Right of First Refusal Law for one year.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Elections: After Wolff and Kauffunger gave

opposing arguments for candidates for the office of second vice president, written ballots were distributed to MCCF members for the contested election. A motion was made to accept the slate for all uncontested offices by voice vote. The motion was approved. Ballots were collected for the election of the Second Vice President.

New Business:

Thomas DeGraba moved that: **The MCCF support the expansion of the University of Maryland at Shady Grove, that the Traville property be made available to meet the University's needs, and that letters of support be sent to the County Council, Delegates and Senators.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Susan Sellers moved that: **The MCCF urge the Montgomery County Public Schools to immediately implement an Algebra Prep course to prepare eight grade students to succeed in Algebra I by the ninth grade.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Dennis Kane moved that: The MCCF support the position of the local civic association that: **1. Intensive use of the 850 Hungerford Drive site is inconsistent with land use policies, 2. The historic value of the Carver Building must be recognized, 3. Given the rapid growth of the county, the use of MCPS property for noneducational purposes is unwise.** The motion was passed and a request was made that the letter should also stress the lack of community participation in the process.

Frank Vrataric made a motion that: **The MCCF oppose the County's support by a \$3 million**

## WALK TO D'FEET ALS

On October 29 the National Capital Area's chapter of The Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association will hold a 3.1 mile walk at Hains Point to raise money for ALS research and for local patient services programs.

Members of MCCF, particularly friends and supporters of Betty Ann Krahnke, may join together to form a MCCF team to participate in this event. For detailed information on the walk, please call Pat Freiberg at 202-331-1448 or check the web site at [www.alsa.naac.org](http://www.alsa.naac.org). To join the MCCF team, call Peggy Dennis at 301-983-9738

**Economic Development Bond of the Ivymount School expansion.** The motion was seconded. Jorge Ribas: support the concept of the school but deplore the illegal tactic of county government. Amendment proposed to refer the matter to the Education Committee. The amendment failed. The motion passed 21 to 6, with Bob Astrove abstaining.

Report of the Nominating Committee: The results of the written ballot count were announced by Frank Vrataric and Dick Kauffunger. Jeanne Goldstein, Steve Howie, Stan Schiff, and Dan Wilhelm were elected to the office of Second Vice President.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Sellers, acting secretary

## Ex-Comm Meeting Minutes June 22, 2000

—by *Richard Zierdt*

Meeting called to order by Pres. Dean Ahmad at 8 p.m.

Agenda approved

President reported on issues regarding a proposed lifting of the housing and jobs moratorium. Glen Orlin has not made a definite recommendation. Dr. Ribas attended a meeting Fairfax County Civic Federation tonight on behalf of MCCF. FCCF desires greater cooperation, also with the Council of Governments.

An invitation is being mailed to all civic association presidents to attend the MCCF Retreat on Monday July 10, at 6:30 p.m.

MCCF vice president Peggy Dennis solicits suggestions for programs at delegates meetings in the coming year. Peggy suggests inviting Dolores Milmo, head of FARM (For A Rural Montgomery). Frank Vrataric has completed a draft document of County Council and Executive violations of county law.

Transportation. Dan Wilhelm. WMATA is holding briefings on June 26 and 28 on public transportation improvements. TPR (Transportation Policy Report) is underway. 37 are people on the committee; several are novices regarding transportation issues. Lane use factors. T&E committee will take it up this summer, tent set for July 20. MCCF members are invited to attend.

Electricity deregulation. Frank Vrataric. Consumers might consider a principal of aggregation—similar to a co-op. Electric rates may be lower if consumers join together. MCCF might assist on this.

Legislation. George Sauer. Charter Review Commission has proposed legislation that would make it more difficult to get referendums on county ballots. Religious Institution Intervention Task Force (ITF): hearing on June 30.

Public Finance and Utilities. Chuck Lapinski. CRC has suggested dropping the "emergency" financing category. "Prevailing wage" law recently changed may be put to referendum in 2002. Should MCCF take a position on "living wage" legislation? Peggy Dennis moves that pro and con articles be printed in next newsletter. Passes on voice vote. Are there too many "perks" in the County budget? Strathmore. Some school programs. Extraneous art projects.

New business.

Future meetings. MCCF Retreat on July 10. ExCom on August 24. Next delegates meeting is on September 11.

Peggy Dennis moved that **MCCF write letters to the press noting the principled students and parents who reported the cheating at Potomac Elementary School and MCCF them the MCCF community hero award in September.** Howie seconds. Passes with one objection.

Meeting adjourned 9:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard Zierdt, recording secretary, MCCF

## Ex-Comm Meeting Minutes August 24, 2000

–by Richard Zierdt

Meeting called to order by MCCF president Dean Ahmad. [Winifred Klein takes minutes.]

Steve Howie announces (on his behalf and Cari Lamari) a Montgomery Forum on Mental Health Issues on Saturday, October 28, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. (morning coffee/donuts, lunch). Councilmember Leggett, members of the Department of Corrections, possibly Dr. Sacher and others will participate. Peggy Dennis suggests \$200 seed money for the event.

Agenda approved.

Approval of minutes of the July meeting is deferred until next meeting by unanimous consent.

Dean Ahmad asks if there is any disagreement over the fact that Bylaws were last amended October 12, 1999. There is no disagreement. Dean notes that according to the Bylaws the membership year is from July 1 through June 30, that names of delinquent member associations are published in the November newsletter and that membership of delinquent organizations are terminated if dues are not received by Jan. 15 following. Dean will e-mail a copy to anyone upon request.

Affordable housing. George Sauer introduces Progressive Montgomery (PM) group (which asks MCCF to join). In the early 70's there was rent control. After termination, landlord/tenant guidelines were established. PM has concerns regarding several provisions of proposed Bill 33-99 that would alter the Landlord-Tenant section of the County Code. PM distributes a letter it sent to county council members regarding the bill. The letter compliments the Council for provisions that strengthen some tenant rights in the proposed legislation (enhancement of subpoena powers; clarification of the authority of the Commission to award mandatory damages and relief and to issue citations; increasing the cap on damage awards by \$500), and opposes eight specific other changes.

[MCCF secretary Richard Zierdt arrives and assumes minutes during affordable housing discussion.]

A landlady comments that late payments create problems in cash flow and that "voluntary" rent control guidelines are ineffective and create needless record keeping. However, they help the county track rents and rate increases. Stan Schiff moves that **three motions previously discussed (which correspond to items 4, 7, 8 in PM's letter) be presented to the general membership with the recommendation that they be approved.** Motion is seconded. These items are: **Oppose the proposed ban on non-attorney representation at Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (CLTA) (continue the practice where tenants may be represented without licensed attorneys); Oppose weakening the retaliatory eviction language (keep the present language pertaining to retaliatory evictions, an important legal defense for tenants challenging evictions in court); Oppose restrictions on powers of CLTA (keep the present language that allows the Commission to investigate violations in the absence of a formal complaint.** Passes without objection.

George Sauer moved that MCCF ExCom **present to the general membership, with a favorable recommendation, that we oppose the elimination of the two-year lease offer.** Motion is seconded and passes without objection.

Holton-Arms School. Jack Sando, president of the Bradley Boulevard Citizens Association, presents a special exception issue with the Holton-Arms School (case CBA-1174-C). Currently, there is an emergency access (used two times), and two other regular accesses, one of which that could be improved. The school seeks a special exception to build an additional regular (third) access to neighborhood streets. BBKA believes this will inundate neighborhood streets with traffic, and that Holton-Arms should incorporate busing and carpooling solutions instead. Steve Howie moves that MCCF support the BBKA motion to deny the special exception and that this position be presented to the MCCF general membership. Motion is seconded. Dean moves that the word 'private' be removed from the third and fourth Whereas clauses. Amendment passes 6-5-1. Motion then passes without objection.

## Budget for July, 2000- June 2001

(as approved by Executive Committee August 24, 2000)

		2000 Proposed	2000 Actual	2001 Proposed
<b>Income</b>				
Dues	[1]	8000	5870	5750
Reception (net)	[2]	1500	10	0
	Total:	9500	5880	5750
 <b>Expenses</b>				
Copying		2000	1779	2000
Postage	[3]	1000	1172	1200
Newsletter Layout	[4]	600	568	600
Communication		500	0	0
Internet	[5]	1500	0	500
COB Rent	[6]	300	240	280
Awards		250	362	350
Misc	[7]	300	87.5	100
Reserve		3050	1671.5	720
	Total:	9500	5880	5750

Notes:

[1] Assumes 100 orgs @ \$50 avg. plus 50 associates @ \$15

[2] Assumes annual reception is a wash

[3] Change in postage account is not included. This was an increase of less than \$100.

[4] Assumes we continue to pay for newsletter layout. An obvious reduction is here if we can return to the days of free layout.

[5] This includes domain site, site design, and maintainance, and could be reduced to zero if it is all donated.

[6] Rent is \$20 per use for regular meetings and \$10 per hour for special events.

[7] In the fiscal year ending June 2000, miscellaneous expenses were \$50 dues for Committee for Montgomery and \$37.50 for refreshments.

Steve Howie. Met a group named Citizens for Quality of Life in Frederick County. Frederick has 5 county commissioners and no county executive. A Frederick County Civic Association also exists. Both groups have been invited to the next General membership.

Dick Strombotne. Referendum reform. 10,000 signatures needed for charter amendments, but 5% of the county's registered voters are needed for a referendum (currently about 21,888). Dick recommends a uniform rule and asks that this question be posed to the electorate through a charter

amendment question in 2002. Some rewording was discussed.

[Dean Ahmad turned the chair over to Peggy Dennis.]

Web progress. Dean Ahmad announced that Jorge Ribas has offered to design the site for free if we host the site at his place of business rather than at CommunityWebInc. No motion was offered to that effect, and the web host will remain John Nelson's Community Web as announced by then-president Ribas at the June meeting. Jeanne Goldstein moves that **the MCCF allocate up to \$200 to Imad-ad-Dean, Inc. to establish a MCCF website.** The motion passes without objection.

[Dean Ahmad resumed the chair.]

Treasurer's Report. Dean Ahmad for Chris Suzich. As of June 30, there is \$1544 in checking and \$3536 in savings, and a postal credit \$250. Motion is seconded and passes without objection. Steve Howie moves that **the MCCF provide up to \$200 in 'seed' money for a symposium on mental health, and decrease reserves from \$500 to \$300.** Motion passes without objection. Peggy Dennis moves **acceptance of the budget as amended** (p. 11).

Program. Peggy Dennis. In September, guests are invited on the subject of the agricultural preserve. October: Charter ballot issues. State delegates to be invited to the November meeting to discuss proposed state legislation.



Jeanne Goldstein listens as Dick Strombotne explains the referendum process in Montgomery County  
–Photo by I. Dean Ahmad

Environment Committee. Charles Pritchard. Various comments.

Membership Committee. Jeanne Goldstein has volunteered to chair. District vice presidents should assist in membership.

Social Activities Committee. Myrna Taylor. MCCF reception for politicians is Sunday, December 3, 7-9 pm. Aspenwood Retirement Center.

Meeting adjourned 10:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Zierdt, MCCF Secretary

## Taking Tobacco Out of Retail Settings?

At our September Meeting, Dick Kauffunger will move to remove tobacco from retail settings by advocating MCCF support Council Bill 23-00.

## A Sound Retreat

–by I. Dean Ahmad, President

A grand tradition of the Civic Federation was revived when our executive committee members and association presidents were invited to a retreat at the home of our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Peggy Dennis. In her beautiful post and beam house we ate a nice potluck supper and then chatted about our objectives for the Federation for the coming year. It was a combination brainstorming/recruiting session and a chance to get to know one another better in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

Fresh faces Bryan Camu, Paul Silver, Couer Delaney, Dick Rettig, Jack Sando, and Paul Silver, joined Tom DeGraba, Jeanne Goldstein, Stan Schiff, Steve Howie, Wini Klein, Fifa Northrup, George Sauer, Cleo Tavani, Fred Thomas, Selma Poritzky, Stuart Rochester, Stan Schiff, Bill Skinner, our hostess Peggy Dennis, and me. Chuck Lapinski also dropped by for a while.

Among the issues to be discussed were agricultural land preservation, affordable housing, mental health issues, community equity, advisory bodies, noise laws, storm water management, emergency and supplemental appropriations, the Charter Review Commission, Neighborhood Advisory Commissions, government ethics issues, public schools, traffic, and, of course, development.

In addition there was substantial discussion as to how to engage in outreach—especially to minorities—and how to improve our effectiveness. It was noted that County officials have expressed a desire to see "new faces." People left the meeting with the hope that we can indeed get new faces added to our numbers.

## Election for Vacant Offices

—by I. Dean Ahmad, President

After the June elections for our officers, two positions were left vacant: District 4 Vice President and District 5 Vice President. Elections will be held to fill these positions will be held at the Sept. 11 general assembly. Robert Creager (Dist 4) and Fram Meyer (Dist. 5) have expressed their willingness to accept the nomination for these positions. The Bylaws on the filling of vacancies read 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.

## Landlord vs. Tenant

—by George Sauer, Legislation Chair

During the dark days of the Nixon administration there was a squeeze on rental housing. The County Council slapped on rent controls and set up a Landlord-Tenant Commission. After a few years, rent controls were lifted, but the Commission served enough purpose that it hung on. Last year the Duncan administration proposed what I call the Landlord and Real Estate Lawyers Civil Relief Act, which would strip the Commission of most of its tenant-friendly language. Progressive Montgomery (of Living Wage fame) proposed the Tenants Relief

Amendments and asked the Civic Federation to join in.

Our Executive Committee has endorsed a number of pertinent positions in the last year, but according to our approved minutes only one of them was submitted to the full membership. This was the tenants right of first refusal, which was approved by our membership in June 2000.

Being brought before the membership are the following four positions endorsed by the Executive Committee:

- 1) Oppose the elimination of two-year leases. These can provide for a rent increase after a year and if the landlord can come up with a good reason not to offer them, they are not mandatory.
- 2) Oppose the ban on non-attorney representation at hearings.
- 3) Oppose weakening the retaliatory eviction guidelines.
- 4) Allow inspectors to testify as to what they know as well as what they are asked.

In addition, I will move at the meeting **that we oppose the elimination of voluntary rent guidelines.**

If anyone would like to join the Legislative Committee in order to concentrate on affordable housing or landlord/tenant issues, please call me at 301-762-7260.

## Is This Access Road Really Necessary?

—by Linda Kauskay,  
Bradley Boulevard Citizens Association

The Bradley Boulevard Citizens Association ("BBCA") has requested the support of the Civic Federation in opposing efforts by a regional school to route commuter traffic through their residential roads. In February of this year, The Holton-Arms School filed an application with the Montgomery County Board of Appeals to modify the school's



existing special exception from the zoning ordinance. The proposed modification, in part, would open a second entrance to the school's campus from the intersection of Beech Tree and Burning Tree Roads. The BBCA has opposed Holton's application and has hired the law firm of Knopf & Brown, as well as several traffic and environmental consultants, to assist the organization in the administrative proceedings.

The BBCA's position is that the proposed entrance, which would be located in the middle of a residential community, poses serious safety hazards and is an inappropriate solution for the school's traffic concerns. The entrance would be available to Holton-Arms' body of 660+ students, as well as by the schools with whom Holton-Arms competes in athletic events and the organizations to whom the school rents its facilities. This would dramatically increase the traffic and congestion on the surrounding residential roads, which are narrow and winding, have few curbs or sidewalks to protect pedestrians, and were not designed to handle safely this level of commuter traffic. While Holton has asserted that it needs a second entrance for emergency access and to relieve traffic congestion at its existing River Road entrance, it already has an emergency access off Burdette Road. The BBCA's position is that rather than building more roads to address any traffic congestion issues, Holton and other schools should adopt a comprehensive traffic management program involving busing and carpooling.

## Community Forum on Mental Health Planned

—by Steve Howie, 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P.

Many residents of Montgomery County are intimately familiar with mental health issues—as consumers of services, or as relatives, friends, care providers, or other acquaintances or professionals. Disorders benefiting from treatment cover a very wide range, can be profoundly disabling if not properly dealt with, and even when 'minor' have a real impact on quality of life and productivity. Yet the system for providing services has undergone changes (not all, perhaps, for the better), is bewilderingly complex, and where at all inadequate may leave acute needs unmet. The result can be that

people not receive adequate care, be misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all, with impacts on their ability to lead productive lives. This can have a particularly strong impact on people who rely on assistance, as many do.

Further complicating matters is the fact that widespread ignorance of the nature of mental illness has unfairly stigmatized a broad segment of our population and placed these issues low on the political priority list.

Several recent incidents in the County's care provision system have prompted several members of the MCCF (Peggy Dennis, Cary Lamari, and Steve Howie) to meet with health care professionals, consumers, and county officials to consider holding a community forum to discuss the state of mental health care in Montgomery County. The response has been enthusiastic. As a result, Cary, Steve, and Peggy have been working with others to set up just such a forum.

Presently, the team has arranged for Saturday, October 28th, in the County Council building. The (draft) schedule is to run from 8:30 am to 2 pm with a break for lunch. Some extremely knowledgeable and active professionals, consumers, officials, and advocacy groups have committed to serving on panels. The next newsletter will provide more details.

Mark your calendars. This will be an important and enlightening forum.

## Secrecy Has No Place in County Government

—by I. Dean Ahmad, President

As President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, which represents 129 civic associations in our county, I feel obliged to make a statement regarding the hastily drafted proposal to include a charter amendment to water down the county's open meeting laws. The Civic Federation has been active for 75 years and as far as I know has consistently been on the side of open government. We object to legislation such as this on two grounds. First, we are in general in favor of open government. As the drafters noted: citizens who

**Mark your calendars!**

**Civic Federation Community Forum  
on the state  
of Mental Health Care  
in Montgomery County**

**Saturday, October 28, 2000, 8:30 AM – 2 PM**

in the First Floor Auditorium of the County Council Building

Some extremely knowledgeable and active professionals, consumers, officials, and advocacy groups have committed to serving on panels. The next newsletter will provide more details. This will be an important and enlightening forum.

(For more information see article on p. 10).

**and**

**Annual Reception for Elected Officials**

**Sunday, December 3, 2000, 7 - 9 p.m.**

Aspenwood Retirement Center  
14400 Homecrest Road, Silver Spring  
(intersection of Bel Pre and Homecrest Roads)

*For more information:* call Myrna Taylor at 301-869-449.

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want Montgomery County to be held to a higher standard of openness that the bare minima required by state law will oppose this legislation. You, our elected and appointed officials work for us, we the people, and your work should not be kept secret from your employers.

Second, this was drafted without public input. Certain questions that have been raised, such as whether the county law threatens attorney-client privileges may merit discussion. But if it merits discussion then it should be brought forward in a manner that provides to studied and open deliberation, not one that demands a rush to judgment from the voters, up or down, on legislation that clearly goes beyond such narrow questions. If there is any merit at all to the concept of holding closed meetings and keeping documents now public from the people, such change must not be put on the ballot until after ample time for discussion. Because of the rush to bring this amendment to a vote, I must make my presentation here without an opportunity to consult with my executive committee, let alone my general membership. I know my organization well enough to predict that we shall come out resoundingly opposed to this by November. However, the Council has deprived itself of the opportunity to hear our considered opinions on whether attorney-client privilege is impacted by the current law and if so, how it might be dealt with by less extreme measures. If it is possible for the Council to withdraw this legislation now I urge you to do so. In any case do not expect an informed electorate to support it.

*[The preceding testimony was presented before the County Council hearing on Charter amendments proposed by the Council. The Council members present at the hearing voted unanimously to refer the amendment to the Charter Review Commission, which effectively removes it from this November's ballot. President Ahmad's testimony was quoted in both the Gazette and The Washington Post.]*

### **Do we have your correct address?**

Send all address corrections  
to Steve Howie

phone: 301-972-2736;  
e-mail: [stevehowie@aol.com](mailto:stevehowie@aol.com)

## **Transportation Policy Report Phase 2 Update**

*–by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Co-Chair*

Since the June report, the Planning Board appointed 38 members to the Task Force, representing various civic, environmental, business, and government groups. In addition to the task force itself, there is a Core team that sets the agenda for the task force meetings. The Core consists of 10 members of the Planning Staff, the two Task Force co-chairs, and two consultants, for a total of 14 people.

These groups are working toward three major milestones – December 2000, May 2001 and October 2001. The first milestone is the development of goals, objectives, and measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to evaluate scenarios, which are also being developed. The work of the task force will be presented to the public later this year. The second two milestones include modifications to the previous work based upon public comment and also to evaluate the scenarios via computer modeling. The public will have an opportunity to comment at each milestone.

The Task Force has met as a group twice a month in June and July. Most of the four official meetings held so far have been designed to educate everyone on what has been going on in the area of transportation and land-use. In addition to the “official meetings,” there was one “Informational” meeting and two “Tutorial” meetings in August. The Task Force did have a meeting to define the study goals and objectives. In addition to the entire Task Force, three committees have been formed to work on specific topics and report back to the Task Force membership. The three committees deal with public outreach, expanding the goals and objectives into MOEs or evaluation criteria, and preliminary work on defining the transportation/land-use scenarios (i.e. alternatives). The Public Outreach Committee has met at least twice. The MOE Committee met four times during late July and August in order to report to the full Task Force on September 6. The Scenario Committee had its first meeting during the last week of August.

After the August “break” (only 7 meetings), the Task Force will resume its twice-a-month meetings (first and third Wednesdays). The Public Outreach and Scenario Committees will continue. An all day Task Force meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 14 to develop the scenarios. A second “Informational” meeting is also scheduled for September 13. All of these meetings are open to the public to observe. They are generally but not always held beginning at 7 PM at the Planning Board facility, 8787 Georgia Ave. Check the Planning Board weekly calendar for current dates and places. If you want more information or want to share your thoughts, you can contact any member of the Task Force. (I am a member.)

## Whistleblowers of Potomac Elementary– Community Heroes

*-by Peggy Dennis*

One definition of a hero is a person who does the right thing at the right time regardless of the consequences. If this is so, then the parents and children of Potomac Elementary School who brought the MSPAP cheating scandal to light well deserve the Civic Federation's "Community Heroes Award".

Over the last few years we have heard that our teachers are incorporating character education and values into the public school curriculum. These are elements of education that cannot be measured by standardized tests. It is rewarding, therefore, to have proof that at least some of the children have learned these lessons well. But how ironic that exposing a scandal within the very school in which the lessons were taught should prove the efficacy of the teaching.

Blowing the whistle on a wrong or scandal is never easy. Telling their parents about the irregularities involved with the test and what they were individually asked to do must have been embarrassing and awkward for the children. Deciding to expose the cheating cannot have been easy for the parents. At the very least, they must have known that it would involve them—and possibly their children—with a lengthy and

unpleasant investigation. Had they foreseen the bitterness and hostility with which some other parents, in their zeal to protect the school's reputation and the principal and teacher whom we all respected and loved, would view their actions, perhaps they would have chosen the other route. It would have been so much easier for them to minimize the significance of what their children were telling them and do nothing.

So it is to that small group—the “John and Jane Does” of Potomac Elementary School who had the honesty, integrity and ultimately, bravery, to do the right thing and expose the cheating scandal that we give our September “Community Heroes Award”.

## From the President

On the day that I was elected to the presidency of this organization, I was in Ireland attending an institute that included a lecture on the problems facing the newly re-organized Russian Federation. Attendees were told that the most severe problem facing Russia was neither a lack of appreciation for free markets nor a lack of desire for political freedom. The biggest problem was the complete unfamiliarity with the concept of civil society, that is, with the sort of things with which Montgomery Civic Federation deals on an ongoing basis.

You can imagine my trepidation about stepping into the shoes of my indefatigable predecessor. Jorge Ribas. His energy, stamina, and the incredible hours he devoted to the presidency of our organization are all well known, and I would make no pretence that I could match let alone exceed his performance in those areas. But by the time we neared summer's end, however, I had time to chat with the our current activists and to meet with potential new ones, and I became increasingly confident that I could play my part in keeping the Montgomery County Civic Federation's eyes on our main mission: maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for all its residents.

First we had a successful retreat at the home of Peggy Dennis. (See article on p. 7.) Subsequently I had discussions with the chairs of the various committees. Most have agreed to continue on, and they have my heartfelt thanks for their dedication. A few have asked me to find

replacements for them so that they can go on to other things. To Jorge Ribas and Ron Yudd goes all of our thanks for their past efforts. I am delighted to report that Jeanne Goldstein and Robert Creager have agreed to take their places as Membership Chair and Public Relations Officer respectively. I am also very grateful to Peggy Dennis who has agreed to take my place as Newsletter Editor starting with the November issue of this newsletter.

Charles Pritchard has expressed a preference to step down from the chairmanship of the Environment Committee, but has agreed to continue serving until I find a suitable replacement. I am also searching for a new Parliamentarian and hope to have an appointee by the time of the Sept. 11 meeting.

Meetings with elected officials and activists with various areas of interest has convinced me that it is possible to forge a new approach in which we all work together towards our common goals. It is unreasonable to expect that citizens, businesses, government agencies, commuters, and the various special interests will agree on everything. It is eminently reasonable however, to think that a decent respect for each other and each others rights will permit us to work together on those things that are truly in the general welfare. That is the attitude that I hope can be the basis upon which we may build the solutions for the various challenges that will face us this year.

The first emergency issue I had to face as President was one on which the Federation's position is obvious: the abrupt placement on the ballot of a charter amendment that would have removed the strong anti-secrecy provisions in Montgomery County law. (See text my testimony to the County Council on p. 9.)

At our first meeting we shall deal with the thorny issues of affordable housing and preservation of agricultural land. My goal is to make sure that all the problems we approach are deliberated upon in an open, frank, and courteous manner. I shall strive to allocate sufficient time for all sides to be heard, and that there will be no railroading of any issue regardless of my personal feelings on any matter. In order to do that at our first meeting, I have had to schedule an agenda that runs past 10 p.m. This was due to a last minute request I

received to tack another item onto the agenda. I ask that members please try to propose items in time for the ExComm meeting preceding each general assembly if at all possible.

At our first meeting we must also ratify the newly appointed officers and committee chairs. The list of appointees will be found on page 15 along with the list of elected officers. This meeting will also provide an opportunity to fill the two vacancies on the executive committee, for District V.P.s for Districts 4 and 5.

When I met recently with the president of the Fairfax County Civic Federation in Virginia, he explained that there was a delegation from Russia coming to observe how American civil society operates. I remembered what I had learned in Ireland about how badly the Russians suffer from the absence of a civil society of which our federation is such a vital part. I intend to run every meeting of the Civic Federation as if there were citizens from Russia sitting among us following every word seeking to understand what makes the quality of life in America so dynamic and yet so comfortable. I invite every one of you to help me to enlighten our imaginary guests.

*–I. Dean Ahmad*

## Letter to the Editor

### Thanks for This Newsletter

We all owe a big thank you to our previous president, Jorge Ribas, and to the newsletter editor, Dean Ahmad, for the consistent quality of the articles in our newsletter and its fine appearance.

As the person who has overseen the monthly collating, folding, labeling, and mailing, I thank all those who helped me with that during the past twelve months. Charles Pritchard was my main helper but many others pitched in once or twice when needed. Thanks go to Myrna Taylor, Chris Suzich, Jorge and Sharon Ribas, Dick Kauffunger, Cari Lamari, Maureen Lambe, Jeanne Goldstein, Brian Gifford, Dan Wilhelm, and George Sauer. I hope I've not forgotten anybody.

In the coming year, I hope many Civic Fed members will agree to donate a few hours to this chore so that nobody has to do very much.

–Charles Wolff

## Editorial

### A Standing Newsletter Policy

It has been an honor and an education to be the editor of this newsletter. Jeanne Goldstein has been a great help in its smooth operation. Also helpful has been the fact that I have adhered to published policies. For this reason, I shall move at the next meeting that the policies printed in the accompanying sidebar be made the standing policies of this newsletter. I hope they will serve my successor as well as they have me.

–I. Dean Ahmad

## Renew Now!

**P**lease help us to have a successful year by renewing your association's membership now. Use the application form enclosed with this newsletter 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. Work together with the other local, regional, and County-wide organizations towards the goals we all share.

Below are Articles II and III of our Bylaws stating the rules regarding membership and dues.

### ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

1. *Eligibility.* Membership in the Federation shall be open to any organized Montgomery County civic, community, homeowner associations and municipalities which support the Federation's object and whose primary purpose is to further the public interest. An association organized for or devoted to only a single local issue shall not be eligible. The boundaries of the residential community represented by each local association must be specified in its by-laws and registered with the Planning Board. Local Associations must represent at least thirty households and regional and county-wide associations must have at least 50 paid memberships to be eligible.

2. *Representation.* Members shall be entitled to voting representation within the Federation, with representation determined by the number of households represented within the association. The maximum number of representatives shall be four, and the president of the association shall be the first representative named.

- a. Local associations. The number of representatives for a member association which represents a residential community shall be two for the first three hundred households, one additional for the next three hundred, and one additional for all households over six hundred.
- b. Umbrella Associations. The number of representatives for member associations whose membership consists of local associations shall be two for the first five hundred households, one additional for the next five hundred households

## Newsletter Policies

We strongly encourage articles to be submitted to the editor by e-mail (currently [deanahmad@yahoo.com](mailto:deanahmad@yahoo.com)). They can be in any standard word processing format (MS Word97 is preferred) and ideally should use the format you see in the final newsletter (11-point Times New Roman font, etc.). All articles **MUST** be received by noon on the second Saturday preceding the delegate's assembly to be announced in the newsletter. (Thus, articles for the October newsletter must be received by noon on Saturday Sept. 23, 2000). Unless an article is mandated by the Bylaws or by the Executive Committee, the Editor has complete discretion as to whether or not it is published. Unless submitted by the Executive Committee, articles advocating only one side of an issue must either conform to a position taken by the Federation or be accompanied by a balancing article. The Editor may make spelling and grammatical corrections. Further, the editor may make changes for space, stylistic, or other reasons unless the author appends a request "Please make no major changes without consultation" to the article. Any such request will be honored, but may reduce the article's chances of appearing. Where space prohibits an article from appearing in the current issue, but the article is of continuing interest, it may be deferred to a future issue.

**2000-2001 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs**

<b>Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>home</b>	<b>office</b>	<b>fax</b>	<b>email</b>
<b>President:</b>	I. Dean Ahmad	301-951-0539	301-656-4714	301-656-4714	deanahmad@yahoo.com
<b>Past-Pres.:</b>	Jorge L. Ribas	301-258-1910	<not available>	301-258-1909	sfristoe@erols.com
<b>1st Vice-Pres.:</b>	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	same	<not available>	hotyakker@aol.com
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Stanley D. Schiff	301-530-6455	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Steve Howie	301-972-2736	same	<not available>	stevehowie@aol.com
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Dan Wilhem	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Chris Suzich	301-417-9522	same	<not available>	jcsuzich@juno.com
<b>Rec. Secretary:</b>	Richard Zierdt	301-881-0283	703-464-1617	<not available>	richard.zierdt@landmark.com
<b>Corres. Sec.:</b>	Winnifred Klein	301-654-8084	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Dist. 1 V.P.:</b>	Fifa Northrup	301-984-9424	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
<b>Dist. 2 V.P.:</b>	Dick Strombotne	301-540-9597	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
<b>Dist. 3 V.P.:</b>	Myrna Taylor	301-869-4499	same	<not available>	<not available>
<b>Dist. 4 V.P.:</b>	<Vacant>				
<b>Dist. 5 V.P.:</b>	<Vacant>				
<b>Historian:</b>	Marcella Petree	301-384-1776	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Newsletter Ed.:</b>	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	same	<not available>	hotyakker@aol.com
<b>Parliamentarian:</b>	To be announced.				
<b>Public Relations:</b>	Robert Creager	301-890-4326	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
<b>Education:</b>	Susan Sellers	301-762-1160	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
<b>Environment:</b>	Charlie Pritchard	301-593-1781	same	<not available>	erc69434@aol.com
<b>Legislation:</b>	George Sauer	301-762-7260	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Membership:</b>	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Pl. &amp; Land Use.:</b>	Stan Schiff	301-530-6455	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Pub. Fin. &amp; Util.:</b>	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	703-506-4600	<not available>	clapinsk@mcri.com
<b>Transportation:</b>	John Viner	301-881-4576	same	<not available>	jviner@erols.com
	Dan Wilhem	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com

and one additional for all households over one thousand.

- c. Regional and County-Wide Associations. The number of representatives for Regional and County-wide Associations shall be two.

3. *Membership Year.* The membership year shall be July 1 through June 30.

4. *Acceptance.* An organization applying for membership shall be admitted upon Affirmative Vote of a Regular Meeting. The name of an applicant association and of proposed delegates shall be published in the newsletter preceding the meeting before the Acceptance vote. The Federation reserves the right to determine the organization that shall represent in the Federation any one specific community. A change in status of any organization must be presented in writing to the Federation.

**ARTICLE III. ANNUAL DUES**

1. *Dues.* Dues of member associations shall be payable in advance and based on the number of delegates as follows: \$35 for the first two delegates and \$15 for each additional delegate.

2. *Partial years.* Dues of members joining after February 1 will be reduced by forty per cent.

3. *Delinquent Dues.* The names of member associations which have not paid their dues will be published in the

November issue of the Federation newsletter. Membership of such delinquent member associations will be terminated if dues are not received by January 15 following. An association dropped for non-payment of dues may rejoin the Federation only upon payment of one year's back dues.

***Think about it...***

You have just read one of the most thorough and accurate newsletters in the County. For 75 years, elected officials, community leaders, citizens and journalists have relied on the Civic Federation News as an authoritative source of citizen's concerns and expectations.

Whether it is environmental issues, traffic congestion, ethics in government, unmet social needs, schools or land use, the **Civic Federation News** provides you with timely and accurate information. Join the Civic Federation today. With the exception of giving your own time and energy, it is the best investment you can make for your community.

Call Dean Ahmad at 301-951-0539 for more information.

## *Delegates Meeting*

**Monday, Sept. 11–7:45 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  
7:50 Adoption of agenda  
7:55 Approval of Minutes, Officers' Reports (p. 2)  
8:00 Community Hero: Whistleblowers of Potomac Elementary  
**8:10 Program: Mandatory Conservation Design for Agricultural Land (p.1)**
- Delores Milmo (For a Rural Montgomery)
  - Jim Dougherty (J. Dougherty Company)
  - Judy Daniel (MNC/PPC Planning Officer)
- 8:40 Question and Answer  
9:05 Old Business  
9:06 New Business
- Affordable Housing (p. 1, 8)
  - Holton Arms Access Road (p. 8)
  - Elections (p. 8)
  - Newsletter Policies (p. 14)
  - Restrict Availability of Tobacco in Retail Settings (p. 7)
- 10:05 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, Sept. 21, 2000, 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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**BULK RATE U.S.  
POSTAGE  
PAID  
Silver Spring, MD  
PERMIT 3356**

Layout by **Imad-ad-Dean, Inc.**  
301-951-0539

Printed by **Kinko's** 301-587-6565  
1407 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, MD 20910