



# CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation

Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

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744<sup>th</sup> Session

[www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org)

February 2003



Karl Moritz explains the Annual Growth Policy to the 743<sup>rd</sup> session of the Federation. –Photo by Dick Kauffinger

## Transportation: The Debate That Wasn't–The Debate That Will Be

–by Stan Schiff, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Northern Virginia had its debate on transportation. Montgomery County did not. The Civic Federation would like to ensure that before fateful decisions are taken there is full discussion of both the critical issues that comprise the transportation problem and the choices that are available to deal with them. There is more to transportation policy than the ICC. Demonizing opponents of the ICC does not constitute policy, nor, for that matter, does demonizing its supporters.

### *In This Issue ...*

Transportation Policy Debate	Page 1
Delegates Meeting Minutes	Page 2
ExComm Meeting Minutes	Page 4
ZTA Call to Action	Page 5
Volunteers Sought for Committees	Page 6
Community Hero: Sarah Gilligan	Page 6
Letter to the Editor	Page 7
Editorial	Page 8
From the President	Page 9
In Memoriam: Marcella Petree	Page 9
Directory of Officers & Comm. Chairs	Page 11
Calendar of Meeting Dates	Page 11
Agenda for February Delegates Meeting	Page 12

The Civic Federation is arranging three events to contribute to public discussion and awareness of some of the major issues that have not been given the attention they merit. None is more crucial than money, especially now with all levels of government (local, state and federal) struggling with huge deficits. Mounting congestion is pervasive. But how much are we willing to pay to relieve it? And, failing adequate funds, are there other measures that might be taken to improve the transportation system? Given the straits in which the County finds itself, where should the priorities go? Transit? Roads? Which transit? What roads? And what of the influence of growth, and is there a role for more effective growth management? These are the kinds of issues which we believe need to be discussed and debated.

We propose beginning with the money question -- the search for revenue sources. At our next Delegates Meeting on Monday, February 10, we will concentrate on this issue. We'll explore local revenue sources, and we hope to have speakers from both the State legislature and the Congress discuss the funding prospects from their levels.

We are planning two other events. For the first, we intend inviting some of the principal participants in the Northern Virginia debate to a panel discussion of the lessons they have drawn from that debate. We believe there may be things we can learn from their experience. We hope to schedule that event for mid-March. The culminating event will be a policy forum to be held in late March/early April. There we will try to demonstrate what we have frequently asserted -- that there is more to transportation policy than a list of road improvement projects. We have not as yet shaped an agenda for that session, but our objective will be to bring funding, priorities and policy measures together in a coherent whole which will match our ambitions with our pocketbooks.

## Delegate Meeting Minutes Jan. 13, 2003

—by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary  
and Jorge Ribas, Acting Secretary

[Following segment submitted by Jorge Ribas.]

Meeting was called to order by MCCF president Cary Lamari at 7:45 pm

Changes to the agenda: Add 3 minutes to new development of inner purple line; Norman: 3 minutes to discuss Federal realty project in Bethesda; Snow removal, 2 minutes. Ribas: 3 minutes to talk about the newsletter and website.

Agenda approved unanimously.

Minutes were adopted unanimously. [Note from Richard Zierdt: Mr. Polinsky's name was misspelled in the minutes for the Delegates meeting of November 12, 2002. Also, Richard Zierdt was not present at that meeting.]

Community Hero: a community hero is somebody that puts others ahead of oneself. Award presented to Lois Sherman.



—Photo by Dick Kauffunger

Remembrances of Marcella Petree and Frank Vrataric. Cary said that their work reflects what the Federation represents. They inspire a sense of community. Cary remembers meeting Frank checking sidewalks and showing that it did not meet criteria of the American Disability act. Frank just wanted to help people, never charged a dime for anything he did to help others. Dick Kauffunger: Frank distinguished himself in many areas—senior issues, affordable housing, access to elderly to community centers, legal aid to those who could not afford a lawyer, disabled, then government accountability. At the end he started doing his own legal work. At the end of Kramer administration, he forced the government to recognize that the county needed to go through the entire approval process. He started COST, the Coalition On Sensible

Transportation, to ensure that we spent the money in areas where we got the most for our transportation investment. His dad was an union organizer. As a young boy, his house was shot at when he was a kid. He came from a rough experience. Jorge spoke about Marcella. Dean said that Frank was working at the end. Marcella was also extraordinary. Dean announced the date for the memorial service and funeral. Dick gave directions. Blair Ewing: with regards to Frank he did more than planning board and county government. He contacted Blair about 25 years ago asking to trade support for seniors and for schools.

[End of segment by Jorge Ribas. MCCF recording secretary Richard Zierdt arrives at 8:00 pm.]

Comments for Frank Vratarić from Jorge Ribas, Dick Fauffunger, Dean Ahmad, and Blair Ewing. Closed schools, ICC, senior citizens, not only in his own neighborhood, but the entire county. A model citizen. Lou Helm speaks; also thanks Frank's wife Ann, who often attended the same meetings and hearings that Frank did. Sharon Constantine speaks of Frank's efforts to establish rules regarding closed school policy. Sammy Young speaks; Marcella got him involved in the civic movement. Was involved with COST. Fife Northrop speaks; admires Frank's courage. Ed Weiss speaks (as a "rookie" with "only" 18 years in the ICC issue); met Frank in Alan Bender's home. Ann Vratarić speaks; she had organized a factory in the '40s. Frank worked at the Harry Diamond firm. Chuck Lapinski speaks; Frank was everything.

Memorial Service for Marcella Petree 1 – 4 PM funeral, 3:30 service, Fleck Funeral Home 7910 Old Sandy Spring Road 410-792-7310.

Maryland Smart Growth Policy Collaborative (MSGPC). Dan Dossier, facilitator, mediator. Group met over the summer. Civic, farm, government, and business interests were represented. 41 people participated. People must be involved in development near where they live.

Dick Kauffunger moves that the **MCCF approve the recommendations of the Collaborative**. Seconded. Pat Cummings: developer consultation with neighbors must be mandatory. Cary: This Collaborative is not the end-all solution, but we need to continue the discussion. Dean Ahmad: There are some items in the document that are not supported. MCCF should not be endorsing the whole document. Stan Shiff: this is a good start. Jorge Ribas seconds Stan's comments. Dean: we cannot

agree to something, then decide against it. Cary: are we interpreting... Richard: Is there a definition of "Smart Growth" in the document? Dan: there is discussion about it. Richard: Is that a 'No'? Dan: No. Richard: MCCF should accept the document's recommendations on a case-by-case basis. Peggy Dennis. This is a good start, first start. ?: What is the consequence of taking no action at this time? Dan: statements of general agreement is a good start. Cary: We need to have policies. Motion passes 26-6-4.

Carl Moritz, employee of the MNCPPC. Annual Growth Policy. Carl was here in September, 1999. Presents a slide presentation. The County looks at Growth Policy every two years. County adopted APFO in 1973. Does not regulate amount, pattern, location, or type of development; it does regulate relative timing of development. The transportation tests: Policy Area transportation review; local area transportation review. Hard and soft moratoriums. Some development may take place in "soft" moratorium areas: small scale (5-house development for example), affordable housing, Metro stations. Montrose Parkway has been placed in the CIP. Schools are tested at three levels (elementary, middle, and high) for every cluster: capacity may not exceed 100% (down from 110%). However, if capacity exists in adjacent clusters, then available capacity from adjacent clusters may be used to add to the capacity of a given cluster. County Council has concerns about the AGP and has initiated Policy Review, to be completed by November 1, 2003: schools too crowded, roads too congested; too geared to 80's growth patterns, not the "mature" county that it is now.

Q/A: Richard: Could two (overcrowded) clusters use excess capacity from a common cluster with available capacity? Carl: No. "What factors 'drive' increases in traffic congestion, school enrollment?" Carl: existing neighborhoods... Chuck Lapinski: intersection guidelines. What are the standards, who sets the standards? Carl: MNCPPC follow professional group recommendations. Lane Use Factors: which assumptions should be used? This issue went before the Council twice. The result was that more traffic was permitted. Pat Cummings: Seems like an easing of requirements is taking place. Carl: A road is permitted when it is fully funded. MNCPPC will recommend that at least some requirements will be tightened. Employer participation has submitted a plan to achieve traffic controls to meet standards. Dick Strombotne: The County seems to plan important issues during the summer, when the citizens are away. Carl: Yes, I agree. Bring this before the Council. Sharon Constantine. Trip

generation on existing roads. Carl: We know what the congestion impact level is. The level of what people will tolerate is... Dick moves to extend discussion 5 minutes. Passes. Jerry: traffic measurement should be done during weekends as well. Carl: No capacity is available in North Bethesda without Montrose Parkway. Stan Shiff: planning is done within planning areas. What is need is a county-wide view. Carl: we think that we are. Stan: If that were true, there wouldn't be excessive traffic congestion throughout the County as a whole. Charles Wolff: APG can only delay, it can't prevent congestion. Can't we have a law that prevents development, rather than delay it? Carl: The law is the master plans. One moratorium has been in place for 16 years (eastern county). Richard: you said ... complaints set...the level of acceptable congestion? Carl: complaints are taken into account...

Tom DeGraba. Bill 38-02 will increase density under the guise of MPDUs, up to 22% density bonus over master plan guidelines, not subject to APG guidelines. Moves that the MCCF oppose bill 38-02. Also, the MCCF should appoint a task force to study the impact upon the MPDU and APG. Dick moves that **MCCF oppose 38-02 and appoint a task force to study the impact upon the MPDU and APG.** Seconded. Cary: asks Carl how MNCPPC views this. Carl: MNCPPC does not oppose the bill. Tom: the bill does permit increased development. Richard: How can the MCCF oppose this bill and support MSGPC recommendations? Tom: this is not smart growth. Passes 24-0-0.

Jorge Ribas thanks Fifa Northrop and... for the Annual Reception. This secretary senses unanimous agreement.

Treasurer's Report is on the back table.

Norman Latker, Edgemoor Citizens Association. County Planning Board endorsed the increased height. ZTA 02-04, passed in the closing days of the last Council ("Smart Growth"). Attorney Knopf feels that there is good chance to stop this on review. (spot zoning). Norman Latker moves that **the MCCF be enter a Friend of the Court brief in support of this suit provided there are no costs of risk of liability.** 5 Seconds. Wayne Goldstein: Is there precedent for the MCCF joining a lawsuit? Chuck: Yes, but we have no standing. Richard: How can the MCCF oppose the approval, yet support the MSGPC recommendations? Mike Bronstein: Does the MCCF have liability insurance, in this litigious society? Motion passes with one opposed and one abstention.

Meeting is adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard Zierdt, MCCF Recording Secretary

## ExComm Meeting Minutes Jan. 22, 2003

–by I. Dean Ahmad and Charles Wolff,  
*Acting Secretaries*

**M**eeeting called to order at 7:46 p.m. by President Cary Lamari.

Agenda changes: Charlie Pritchard; one minute on unfair costs of MVA license registration for people who move. Charlie will write a news article. Peggy Dennis: meeting and newsletter dates.

Minutes of December meeting accepted as printed in the newsletter without objection.

Treasurer's report. Luella Mast reported. We need to sign up for room for general meetings. Peggy Dennis will write a short editorial on changing meeting dates to one week earlier or later or to Tuesday. A treasurer's report was distributed (appended). Dean Ahmad moved the Treasurer's report be accepted as submitted. There was no objection.

Knopf/Bethesda lawsuit. The general membership approved filing an amicus brief on the question of legislation targeting a particular piece of property (spot zoning) provided there were no costs or liability risks to the Federation. Peggy thinks we can trust Norman Knopf's knowledge of the law and that he would not have asked us to do this if there were any liability risks. Dean moved that **MCCF proceed with the suit, being prepared to abort should our attorney or the people's council advise us that we are at risk.** There was no objection.

TPR workshop update. Dan has prepared a power-point presentation to take our TPR positions to civic associations.

Jim for Sarah Gilligan on Bill 38-02, (son of Bill 33-02). Amendments increase number of MPD units to qualify. Another amendment excludes properties adjacent to, abutting, or confronting detached

residential homes, townhouses must not exceed 40% of the residential units in a project. Silverman wants a vote soon. On Feb. 25 there will be a hearing at the Council and vote in March. We want 38-02 vote delayed until 33-02 can be considered. Jim will ask Sarah to write an article for the newsletter.

Inner Purple Line (IPL): Cary announced that we are on the waiting list to testify at the Jan. 30 Planning Board hearings in support of the Federation's proposal against Duncan's proposal on the Purple Line. Dean summarized the Duncan proposal, noting that it is a hybrid between the state's IPL and Duncan's original Outer Purple Line. It has incorporated some ideas from the Federation's IPL proposal including under-grounding and a true connection to the Red Line METRO, but that it goes to the NIH METRO station rather than to downtown Bethesda. Cary ruled that the Federation's current position is against the Duncan proposal. There was a motion to **testify against the Duncan hybrid Purple line**. Dean cautioned that because Duncan's proposal incorporates some of our conditions, that whoever testifies must make it clear that we oppose the state's proposal for the Inner Purple Line because of the stop at Chevy Chase Lake, the absence of a station at Longbranch, and because it is above ground. The motion passed 8-0-2.

[Following segment submitted by Charles Wolff]

Jorge Ribas initiated a discussion as to whether the web site maintenance and the newsletter layout should be turned over to a volunteer. The suggestion to terminate the contract for web site maintenance was dropped after a consensus expression of satisfaction with the quality of the site.

There was a discussion of laying out the newsletter. All members felt the newsletter was being done in a professional manner. There was concern by two members that the Federation is a volunteer organization and should draw on volunteers whenever possible. Jorge and Sharon Ribas volunteered to do the newsletter layout without cost to the organization. Newsletter Editor Peggy Dennis accepted the Ribas' offer, and the group expressed its appreciation for the high quality and professional manner in which Dean Ahmad and his company have performed this service during the last several years. [End of segment by Charles Wolff]

Property tax assessments. Assessment has been raised from 40% to 100% with the intention of reducing the

rate correspondingly. Council can, by supermajority vote, waive the reduction. We need to address the effects of tax increases. Marvin Weinman and Cleo Tavani were mentioned to look into the matter.

Cary **nominated Jim Humphrey and Sarah Gilligan for community hero for March or February**. Passed without objection.

Feb. program is transportation funding (Stan Schiff).  
March program is monobeam (Stan Doerr.)

Cary requested the minutes reflect that the grace period has ended for those who have not renewed their dues and they will be cut from the newsletter list.

Peggy reviewed the newsletter assignments.

Jorge suggested we express our gratitude to former president Bill Skinner who has left the county. Passed by acclamation.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
I. Dean Ahmad

## Citizens Should Contact County Council on Zoning Amendments

–Sarah Gilligan,  
Maplewood Homeowners Association

In December, Montgomery County Council President Steve Silverman introduced Council Bill 38-02. If passed as written, the bill would allow developers to build townhouses on parcels currently zoned for single-family detached houses, by including moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs). Previously, this method has been used in developments of 50 units or more. The Council recently voted to lower that minimum number to 35. If Bill 38-02 is passed as written, developers will be able to use this development method on any size parcel, regardless of the number of units that can be built on that parcel.

At the public hearing recently held by the County Council, the Montgomery County Civic Federation and

a number of individual neighborhood associations spoke in opposition to Bill 38-02. Their opposition was not based on the inclusion of MPDUs, but on the concern that developers might abuse the legislation to evade zoning standards that exist to protect neighborhoods from incompatible, high-density development on adjacent parcels.

The Council vote on Bill 38-02 is currently scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup>. However, on January 21<sup>st</sup>, Councilmember Marilyn Praisner introduced Zoning Text Amendment 03-01 which was co-sponsored by Councilmembers Howard Denis and Tom Perez. ZTA 03-01 would add some zoning rules and standards to Bill 38-02 that would protect neighborhoods from incompatible development. A There will be a public hearing in front of the County Council on Amendment 03-01 on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

The County Council **should not vote on Bill 38-02** until protections afforded by **Zoning Text Amendment 03-01** have first been **approved and enacted**. The council needs to give the zoning changes a chance to catch up with the legislative changes. If the councilmembers vote on Bill 38-02 before ZTA 03-01 is enacted, they won't really know what they are voting for or against.

Citizens from all over the County need to FAX, email, telephone, or write letters to ALL County Council members and tell them to **DEFER THE VOTE** on Bill 38-02 until after the adoption of ZTA 03-01. The Councilmembers we need to write to are (be sure to contact each one): Council President Michael Subin, George Leventhal, Mike Knapp, Tom Perez, Nancy Floreen, Marilyn Praisner, Howard Denis, Phil Andrews, and Steve Silverman. You can reach them at: Montgomery County Council, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850; Telephone 240-777-7900; FAX 240-777-7989; or email [county.council@co.mo.md.us](mailto:county.council@co.mo.md.us).

Please contact them as soon as possible since Bill 38-02 may come up for a vote as early as February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**The MCCF is seeking members for its AUDIT COMMITTEE. If you wish to serve, contact Cary Lamari at 301-924-2746 or at [carylamari@yahoo.com](mailto:carylamari@yahoo.com).**

## Volunteers Sought For Committees

–by Cary Lamary, President

The Federation needs volunteers to serve briefly on two committees. The Nominating Committee meets once or twice in the late winter or spring to select and recruit officers for the coming year. The Awards Committee meets similarly to select the individuals who will receive our special awards at the June Delegates Meeting. Anyone willing to serve on either committee should speak to Cary Lamari at 301-924-2746 or at the next Delegates Meeting on February 10th.

### Bylaw on Nominating Committee (Art. VI):

4. *Nominating Committee.* A committee of at least five but not more than seven delegates shall be elected at the Regular March Meeting. The committee shall nominate one person for each of the elected positions. No incumbent officer shall be eligible for election to the Nominating Committee, nor may the Nominating Committee nominate one of its members for any position. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented at the May Meeting and published in the May Newsletter.

### Bylaw on Awards Committee (Art. XVI):

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.

## Community Hero: Pastor T.J. Baltimore

–by Pat Cummings, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Perhaps “Community Blessing” might be a more appropriate label for Dr. Thomas Jeremiah Baltimore, Sr., this month’s Community Hero. Dr. Baltimore is the founder and senior minister of the People’s Community Baptist Church in the Norwood Road/New Hampshire Avenue area of Silver Spring. In the 27 years of his leadership, the church has grown from 70 members who met in a trailer to over 4,000 members.

In the works are plans for the church to expand beyond its already impressive facilities so it can offer independent living housing for the elderly and day care programs for adults and children.

His guiding vision for the church has been one of active social commitment, an “entrepreneurial church” in which church members translate their spiritual values into real-world action, utilizing whatever skills they have to help people in need and strengthen communities. He has achieved remarkable success in implementing this vision.

Dr. Baltimore’s original career path placed him in the management track of a large corporation, and his exceptional management and organizational skills are very visible in the church services that flow like clockwork, the five large, professional-quality choirs, and the warmth and enthusiasm of the congregation. A believer in shared leadership, Pastor Baltimore has been able to expand his effectiveness by inspiring the emergence of a continuously expanding cadre of leaders who share his vision and who contribute their creative and entrepreneurial skills to meet the needs of parishioners and the larger community.

Reflecting Pastor Baltimore’s concern for education, the congregation established a “Saturday; School,” which provides PSAT and SAT preparatory courses and also created a scholarship fund bearing his name.

Because of his belief that the church should promote economic as well as spiritual development in the African-American community, Pastor Baltimore established a foundation in 2002 to assist potential business entrepreneurs, community leaders, and religious leaders and educators. He encouraged the church to create its own Chamber of Commerce, which received recognition from the National Black Chamber of Commerce as the first church-sponsored chamber and also received a grant from the Montgomery County Office of Economic Development to help it reach minority business owners.

In 2001, under Pastor Baltimore’s leadership, the church’s community focus expanded to provide assistance to people who wanted to adopt children. This adoption support initiative now receives grant support from the One Child, One Church program.

The most recent and, perhaps, the crowning achievement of Pastor Baltimore and The People’s Community Baptist Church was the opening this fall of

a county-funded Wellness Center which will provide community-based, primary-care free clinic services.

Because of his many contributions to Montgomery County, Dr. Baltimore received the county’s 2002 Humanitarian Award, and he was inducted into the Hall of Fame sponsored by the county’s Office of Human rights. In May, 2002 he received an honorary degree from Montgomery College. He has also been appointed to several boards and committees affecting Montgomery County

In recent years, his ministry has expanded beyond the boundaries of Montgomery County. When a deadly hurricane struck Princeville, NC in 1999, the church’s Social Action Ministry restored a widow’s bungalow. After he and 70 members of his congregation visited a Baptist Church in South Africa, Pastor Baltimore established a sister relationship with the church, sent them \$2,500 each month for two years to help pay off their debt and support their refugee ministry, and sent them barrels of clothing and personal care items for their members in need. In 1996, he chaired the American Baptist Churches Project at the 1996 Olympics. He is a nationally recognized expert on issues related to church development and growth.

This Community Hero has been remarkably effective in implementing his vision of service to people and communities, and we in Montgomery County are truly blessed to be able to benefit from his talent and dedication.

## Letter to the Editor

### Was Montgomery County Bought and Sold?

Before the Primary Election, developers and corporate special interest groups pledged to spend whatever it would take to defeat candidates in Montgomery County who oppose the ICC. Apparently County Executive Douglas Duncan wasn't satisfied with the findings of several major ICC studies that cost millions of dollars and took years to produce. These studies revealed that the ICC would relieve congestion by an average of 4%. Mr. Duncan introduced an "overnight" \$10.8 billion "Go Montgomery" transportation plan that claims it will reduce congestion by 24%. The "Go Montgomery" plan was widely publicized before the September Primary and the public bought it. Polls were taken that

claimed that the majority of the public wants the ICC. Neighbors for a Better Montgomery (www.neighborspac.org) reported the following:

- (1) Mr. Duncan spent over 1.2 million in the 2002 campaign with \$370,000 going to "End Gridlock" and from there into support for development-friendly candidates whom Duncan endorsed;
- (2) development-backed organizations poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into this election;
- (3) "End Gridlock" raised more than \$500,000 and spent this money getting aggressive-development candidates elected to the Montgomery County Council;
- (4) "Citizens for Quality Living" (CQL), is sponsored by the National Association of Realtors, the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Trade. CQL spent \$120,000 supporting pro-development candidates and \$15,000 on television ads in support of the ICC and mailings that indirectly attacked certain County Council candidates who oppose the freeway.

Apparently people's frustration with traffic congestion was used in combination with a classic smear campaign of lies, ridicule and distortions to defeat Council Member Blair Ewing and other citizen-oriented candidates. In my opinion, the big, special interest money involved in this election was not only about future development in and around the ICC right-of-way. It was about development throughout the county.

Was Montgomery County bought and sold?

–Lois Sherman, *Founding Member,  
Montgomery Inter-County Connector Coalition*

## Editorial

### Proposal to Change Meeting Dates

The January Newsletter carried a short piece asking for feedback on the proposal to change the dates for our Delegates Meetings to the first or third Monday of each month. This was suggested because having the meetings on the second Monday causes the production of the Newsletter to fall towards the end of the month, a period that coincides with major holidays in five out of the ten months when we do the Newsletter. This

creates major problems and hardships for some of those involved in the Newsletter production. As we received no feedback, pro or con, I am proposing a change in Article XI of the Bylaws that would read, "Regular meetings of the Federation shall be held at 7:45 pm on the first Monday of each month...." Barring significant objection to this Bylaws change, the Treasurer will book the auditorium of the Council Office Building accordingly.

–Photo by Frances Eddy

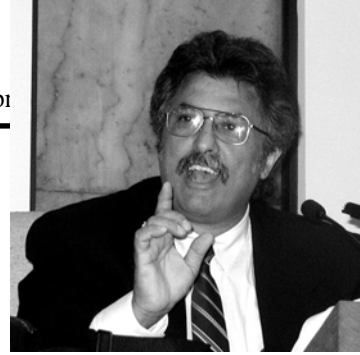


–Peggy Dennis

### Newsletter Policies

We strongly encourage articles to be submitted to the editor by e-mail (hotyakker@aol.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. 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.





## From the President

This month I was going to write about increases in our real estate taxes. However, after a conversation with one of our delegates I feel compelled to write about the arrogance and waste in government instead.

A few months ago we had a presentation by the Wheaton Redevelopment Steering Committee. Members of that group had contacted me and raised concerns about the direction the redevelopment of Wheaton was heading. One of our delegates, Bob Abrams, a member of the Wheaton Redevelopment Steering Committee wrote a follow-up article on the topic. He questioned the focus of the group and the wisdom of increasing housing stock in an area that already suffers from deficiencies in public infrastructure and services; mainly education, transportation and public safety services.

I have known Bob Abrams for several years now. I know him to be a sincere individual who cares very deeply for his community; a man who works very hard in every endeavor whether it is in his capacity as a member of the Board of Directors of the Montgomery Housing Partnership, as a volunteer providing after school teaching assistance, or as a member of the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board. Bob Abrams is a selfless and giving individual. That was why I was taken back when I heard that Mr. Duncan refused to renew his seat on the Wheaton Redevelopment Steering Committee.

It is typical of Doug Duncan's administration that when someone offers an opinion which is critical of or contrary to what the Executive has in mind, he or she doesn't stay on such an advisory committee very long. We have seen this before and too often. I myself experienced this kind of treatment first hand. When I was on the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board I wrote letters to the editor expressing opinions critical of the Pay and Go program. I was called by the then-Chair of the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board and told that I did not have the right to publicly express views that were contrary to the Executive's or County Council's adopted policies. According to Bruce Romer, Mr. Duncan's Chief Administrative Officer, there is an expectation of loyalty and support extending from County employees to volunteers. Any public criticism or expression of a differing viewpoint is tantamount to disloyalty and merits expulsion. I was left with no option but to resign.

—Photo by I. Dean Ahmad

Two of the most important elements of a free and democratic society are the ability of citizens to freely express their opinions and to tolerate and respect differing viewpoints. For some years Montgomery County has encouraged the participation of its citizens in numerous advisory boards. These boards were originally established to provide the County government with a broad base of ideas and honest feed back. The County should benefit immensely from the wide experiences and wisdom of our citizens, but during Duncan's administration citizens advisory boards have devolved into mere rubber stamps with those who express criticism or dissent being forced out. This augurs poorly for the future of citizen participation, activism and good government in general.

Time and again Duncan's administration has demonstrated arrogance toward its best-informed and most involved citizens. Whether the topic is mental health, the selling off of school buildings, the number of students in classrooms, the Clarksburg jail, the conference center, the sloppy procurement procedures used in the Lucite telephone deal or the gift of \$50 million to the Marriott Corporation, Duncan's administration has shown a propensity to ignore or vilify honest and well-founded criticism. Perhaps the most egregious example is that of transportation. While the County Executive has spent less than 70% of the transportation budget on transportation improvements and apparently diverted the remainder of these funds to other purposes, Duncan still claims to be "the Transportation Administration".

Citizens need to wake up to the fact that this administration is neither receptive to nor tolerant of criticism or differing ideas. Yet it seems nothing sticks to Mr. Duncan and he has been elected to an unprecedented third term. It's amazing what money and the media can do! It's about time our County Executive became more receptive to the ideas and concerns of citizens and less tyrannical about imposing solutions that lack broad based community support.

—Cary Lamari

**In Memoriam:  
An Ideal Activist**

–by I. Dean Ahmad,  
Immediate Past President

It's been a hard two months for the Civic Federation. On Jan. 8, 2003, one month to the day after losing Frank Vratarić, we lost Marcella Petree.

When I joined the Federation in late 1980s, Marcella was already ten years into her active retirement from her terms as MCCF President. She continued to be a Federation activist until her illness three years ago. Despite her illness, she continued as MCCF Historian (and archivist) until the current membership year.

When Marcella ran for President, she knew that she would be stuck with the job of newsletter editor. With her characteristic good humor she issued the following "campaign promise:" "If elected your president for 1977-78, I promise to soften the blow that falls monthly on the one-man presidential newsletter committee by inviting signed articles.... Let all contributing writers be forewarned, however, that the right to edit (sharpen, slant, purify, destroy) will be reserved to the Editor-in-Chief."

Marcella was active on many issues through the years. She will long be remembered for her decisive action in defeating the Quick-take proposal of WSSC, in which a quasi-governmental utility tried to appropriate the government's power of eminent domain. I personally will always remember how it was she, a fellow physicist, who turned the Federation on to the issue of light pollution.

In the more than a decade in which our Federation involvement intersected, Marcella was a vital part of the backbone of the Federation. She was always a pleasant and encouraging presence who blended her sharp mind with a quiet enthusiasm that helped to keep a sense of balance amid the turbulence of civic affairs. She worked valiantly to include as many people, especially new people, at all levels of the organization.

At a memorial service held last month for Marcella, her friends, neighbors and fellow civic activists recalled her inclusiveness, her sharp mind, and

the fact that she truly listened to people when she spoke with them. When Marcella was young and had gone off on her own, her mother sent her a letter of advice that included the following close paraphrase of some lines from the Henry Van Dyke's "To Be Glad of Life":

*"Be glad of life because it gives a chance to love, to work, to play and to look up at the stars. Think seldom of your enemies. Think often of your friends, and every day of Christ. Spend as much time as you can body-spirit in God's out-of-doors."*

Marcella obviously listened to her mother, and we were all beneficiaries.

Marcella's decades of commitment to the Federation were supported by her devoted husband Ben Petree, who modestly referred to himself as her "chauffeur" (driving her around in their beloved Corvairs).

Sympathy cards may be sent to Ben Petree, 13490 Columbia Road, Silver Spring MD 20904.



–Photo courtesy Ben Petree

2002-2003 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs					
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<b>Transportation:</b>	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	703-883-6847	<not available>	<a href="mailto:djwilhelm@erols.com">djwilhelm@erols.com</a>

## Mark Your Calendars

Please mark your calendars with the dates of the General Delegates meetings for the remainder of the spring. All meetings will be held in the COB Auditorium, beginning at 7:45 p.m.

Monday, Feb 10, 2003  
 Monday, Mar 10, 2003  
 Monday, Apr 14, 2003  
 Monday, May 12, 2003  
 Monday, June 9, 2003

### Do we have your correct address?

Send all address correction  
to Steve Howie

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

## *Think about it...*

You have just read one of the most thorough and accurate newsletters in the County. For almost 78 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.

Download your application form from our website  
[www.montgomery.org/application](http://www.montgomery.org/application).

*Delegates Meetings*

**Monday, Feb.10–7:15 p.m.\***

**1<sup>st</sup> fl. Auditorium  
County Co. Office Bldg., Rockville, MD**

**AGENDA:**

- 7:15 Call to order, Cary Lamari presiding
- 7:20 **Program Transportation Funding** (p. 1)
- 8:15 Questions and Discussion
- 8:30 Announcements and introductions
- 8:35 Adoption of the Agenda
- 8:40 Approval of Minutes (p. 2)
- 8:45 Community Hero Award Pastor Baltimore (p. 8)
- 8:50 Old Business, Officers' Reports
- 9:20 New Business
- 9:45 Adjournment

\*Note: The February meeting will start earlier than normal because of the lengthy program.

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, Feb. 22. Attach submission to e-mail to: Hotyakker@aol.com file in fully justified 11-point Times Roman font (preferably as a Word document.) Send editorial content to Peggy Dennis, 1111 Fawsett Road, Potomac, MD 20854.

**Please send all address corrections to Steve Howie**, P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871, 301-972-2736, [stevehowie@aol.com](mailto:stevehowie@aol.com).

**Next Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

**Red Brick Courthouse**

29 Courthouse Square, Rockville

(Note: there is parking lot in front of the courthouse.)

**Montgomery County Civic Federation  
Steve Howie, Database Manager  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, MD 20871**

**First Class Mail**

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