

"Federation Corner" column
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2011 Civic Federation Awards Banquet will be held May 13

by Sandy Vogelgesang
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The Montgomery County Civic Federation's 2011 Awards Banquet will be held the evening of Friday, May 13, in the Conference Center (Building II) on the campus of the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. A wine reception will take place from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by dinner, then capped off by the awards program. This annual event provides an opportunity to socialize with county elected and appointed officials, to honor the awardees for providing outstanding volunteer service to the county and its residents, and enjoy a terrific meal planned for us by Chef Franz Corrales, the USG Conference Center's caterer.

Reservations are required and must be received by mail, with payment, no later than Monday, May 9, so we can provide an accurate count for dinner. The reservation form, including directions to the venue and the banquet menu, can be downloaded from the homepage of the MCCF website at www.montgomerycivic.org.

The following is a list of this year's award recipients.

The Wayne Goldstein Award, which is conferred on an individual or group for outstanding public service to the people of Montgomery County, will be given to the non-profit group Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc. The organization was founded in 1982 with the aim of organizing library patrons to supplement operating funds provided to our public libraries in the county's annual budget.

Over the years, the Friends of the Library has expanded its mission to include advocacy, program support, and provision of matching funds, specific materials and equipment to county public libraries. Their annual book sale, an early FOLMC fundraising project started in a bookmobile parked outside the Rockville Library, has evolved into three year-round bookstores located in Wheaton, Rockville and Gaithersburg, the proceeds from which benefit libraries and worthy community projects. While Friends of the Library serves the entire library system, 16 of the county's 21 branch libraries have FOLMC chapters dedicated to improving that library.

County Council member Hans Riemer (D.-AtLarge) will present the Goldstein Award to Friends of the Library, Montgomery County.

The members of the Organizational Reform Commission (ORC) will receive the Sentinel Award, sponsored by The Montgomery Sentinel newspaper and given to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. The Commission was created in July 2010 to recommend potential reorganization or consolidation of functions performed by County government and County-funded agencies. The ORC was composed of eight county residents experienced in government, business or non-profit service delivery, four named by the County Executive and four by the County Council. Commissioners broke into four working groups, and met with County officials, representatives from key county organizations, and mayors and officials from county municipalities.

The eight ORC members collectively spent hundred of hours gathering and analyzing information before issuing their Final Report on January 31 of this year. The report contains nearly three dozen detailed recommendations for saving money by improving government functioning. Serving as Commissioners were Scott Fosler, Daniel Hoffman, Len Simon, Christina Echavarren, Joan Fidler, Susan Heltemes, and Co-Chairs Vernon Ricks, Jr. and Richard Wegman.

County Council Vice President Roger Berliner (D.-Dist.1) will present the Sentinel Award to the Organizational Reform Commission.

The Star Cup, sponsored by the Civic Federation, is awarded to a delegate or committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County. This year the award will be presented to the MCCF Environment Committee. For the last several years our Environment Committee has been co-chaired by Caren Madsen and Ginny Barnes, both recently named among the County's top 40 environmentalists. This dynamic duo works very actively with other groups and individuals to promote stronger laws and regulations to protect and improve the county's natural resources. Caren and Ginny's most noted accomplishment has been their work with the Stormwater Partners which has just this year been instrumental in negotiating terms for Environmental Site Design legislation in the county. They worked with Diane Cameron from Stormwater Partners to establish the nonprofit Conservation Montgomery which is serving as a coalition of both environmental and civic organizations, including MCCF.

Ms. Barnes and Ms. Madsen continue to work toward strengthening the Forest Conservation Law to add protection for smaller stands and individual trees. This is particularly important in the "down county" where infill development threatens the mature trees which shade our streets, cool our homes, manage stormwater runoff, provide habitat and create the character of our cherished older neighborhoods. Caren and Ginny are now working with the Stormwater Partners to urge county agencies to adopt a standard for using trees as a nonstructural method of on-site stormwater management. They hope to incorporate the standard into new tree legislation over the summer. They have also been active in fending off threats to the environmental stewardship of the county's parks. Their activities are reflected in the work they undertake behind the scenes, the positions they recommend that the Federation's delegates take regarding the environment, and the excellent articles they provide to the MCCF newsletter and the Federation Corner column published weekly in this newspaper.

County Council President Valerie Ervin (D.-Dist.5) will present the Star Cup to the Co-Chairs of the Federation's Environment Committee.

Do plan on attending this special event honoring the public service provided by these county volunteers, and mail your reservation today.

The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect formal positions adopted by the Federation. To submit an 800-1000 word column for consideration, send as an email attachment to theelms518@earthlink.net