

Crofton Community Honors Volunteers At Awards Banquet



Photo by Terri Peters

On Nov. 2, local politicians and civic leaders gathered at the Crofton Country Club to pay tribute to outstanding volunteers.

By Terri Peters

Community organizations and elected officials rallied together on November 2 at Crofton Country Club to honor community members and volunteers who have worked to make a difference in the Crofton area over the past year. The Greater Crofton Community Awards Banquet has been put on by the Greater Crofton Chamber

of Commerce for nearly 15 years and serves as an opportunity for organizations within the chamber to pay tribute to individuals who have made significant contributions to the area through their service.

Nine awards were given during the ceremony, each presented by a Crofton community organization. Award recipients were given

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a plaque, as well as citations prepared by the elected officials in attendance, thanking them for their service to the community.

The Crofton Rotary presented two awards. The first, given to Sheriff Ron Bateman, recognized Bateman for meritorious service to the Crofton area in organizing the Fallen Heroes Motorcycle Ride, an event that recognizes fallen police officers for their service.

The Rotary also presented the Raymond E. Spry Rotarian Of The Year award to Joe Bowen. Frank Newhard serves as president of the Crofton Rotary, and praised Bowen for his efforts to recruit new members, support the rotary financially, and help with the organizing of both the Fallen Heroes Motorcycle Ride and the Black and White Gala fundraiser.

Senator Ed Reilly was honored by the Greater Crofton Chamber of Commerce as Business Leader Of The Year. Reilly has been a member of the chamber for 11 years, and serves the Crofton community both politically and as an insurance agent through Nationwide Insurance.

"It's easy to live in Crofton," said Reilly. "To be of ser-

vice to good neighbors and to people that you like is easy."

The Arundel Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD), represented by Julie Peterson, presented an Appreciation Award to the volunteers who help with the sale of pit beef at the fire department. Although the volunteers were not present at the event, Peterson spoke on their behalf, praising them for their commitment to waking up early, preparing the smoking equipment, and cooking and serving pit beef to the community. Peterson said the money from pit beef fundraisers goes toward buying new equipment for the AVFD.

A local teacher, Lori Stuart, was honored by the Crofton Kiwanis Club for her service to the students of Four Seasons Elementary School. Stuart is currently in her fourth year at Four Seasons as a counselor, and was nominated by Principal Sharon Ferralli, who praised Stuart's efforts to help students end bullying, set goals, manage anger, deal with death and divorce, and handle other important issues.

The Crofton Community Center presented Donna Doyle with their Person Of The Year award. According to presenter Janet Green, Doyle

has lent invaluable expertise and fundraising abilities to efforts to build a community center in the Crofton area. Green described the process of building the center as "herculean," and celebrated Doyle for working steadfastly to get the center off the ground.

Steve Grimaud, president of the Crofton Civic Association, presented the Police Officer Of The Year award to Police Chief Earl Fox. After serving as a police officer in the area for 28 years, Fox was recently named as the new police chief. Grimaud spoke at length about the instrumental role Fox played in the July incident of a thwarted mass shooting in the area. Fox received a citation for his efforts earlier in the year, and was credited with keeping the area safe during the ordeal.

The Crofton Athletic Council presented their Cardinal Of The Year award to long-time volunteer, coach and commissioner Michael Najarian. Najarian was commended for his 10 years of service to the Cardinals, and was called a "true leader" by John Kerr. Kerr serves as president of the Athletic Council, and said that during Najarian's time with the organization, he not only helped the foot-

ball team win seven county championships, but also raised enrollment numbers by more than 100 children.

The final award of the evening was given to local resident George Clapp, who was named Citizen Of The Year by the Greater Crofton Council. According to Dan Scholfield, council president, Clapp has been highly active in the community over the past year through leading a playground-building project, assisting with the Crofton Night Out Against Crime initiative, serving as president of his community association, and volunteering at local elementary and middle schools.

Scholfield also used his time at the podium to provide some background about the Greater Crofton Council, and about the evening in general. "The idea has always been to get homeowners, community associations, businesses and public officials communicating and speaking with each other," said Scholfield.

Judy Wilson, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, has organized the awards banquet for the last 10 years. "It's a nice time for the community to see what volunteers are out in the community doing," she said.