

Montgomery Village Observer 2007 Citizen of the Year

**Officer Diane Tillery
Community Services Officer
Montgomery County Police**



All in a Day's Work

In a letter published in the January 18th *Village News*, Diane Tillery, Community Service officer assigned to the Village, commented on a recent article on “Smash and Grab” burglaries, updated the community on the incidents, explained how the Police Reporting Unit response system works, detailed what the 6th Police District is doing to combat the county-wide increase in vehicle thefts as well as educated and encouraged citizens on what they should do to avoid being a victim of theft. The letter is just one example of Officer Tillery’s pro-active energy force and dedicated determination to keeping Montgomery Village citizens safe, informed and secure.

No one is more knowledgably and aware of what is happening in the Village than Diane Tillery. She is connected, informed and sensitive, not just of matters of security and safety, but also the critical concerns, issues and activities of the homes corporations, condominiums, residential rental, commercial, and educational communities of Montgomery Village.

She has daily contact with community, resident and commercial property representatives, and private security guard personnel as she answers e-mail and phone inquiries, identifies owners of vehicles, discusses incidents and exchanges information.

Memorable Service to the Village

Officer Diane Tillery's most memorable service was her outstanding police work to uncover the full extent of the series of embezzlements and thefts of funds from the Montgomery Village Foundation.

During the first week of May 2007, after the sentencing of Laura Buttry with a \$1,000 fine and probation for embezzlement of \$14,000 [Village leaders and spokesperson](#) were assuring the Village that "all transactions and monies have been accounted for." As MVF Board President Keith Silliman was quoted in the [February 14th Gazette](#) "I think it's been methodically pursued and based on what I'm seeing, it will be resolved and there will be no loss to the Foundation. I think under the circumstances, this is as reasonable an answer as we can expect."

However, under the circumstances, Officer Tillery and Prosecutor Tracy Bortnick of the Montgomery County State's Attorney's office were not convinced. For the next three months, Diane worked with her usual determination and tenacity to uncover 44 additional, separate transactions of theft and embezzlement with an estimated loss to the Foundation of \$266,000.

As reported in the October 24th [Gazette story](#) on the sentencing, "I can't tell how many people have called my office to say 'Go after this lady; this is my money she stole,' testified Officer Diane Tillery, community services officer for the county's 6th District police station who led the police part of the investigation.

"Tillery said Buttry's tactics included false invoices, duplicate checks, unauthorized wire transfers and falsified documents that drew \$38,000 from a co-worker's retirement account. She also discovered that Buttry's embezzlements paid for a family trip to Disneyland, several airline tickets and two week-long vacations to the Outer Banks of North Carolina, where the family rented luxury homes for \$4,000 a week".

Profile of a Professional Police Officer

[In an article in The Gazette on her 25th](#) anniversary on the Montgomery County police force, Officer Tillery shared with staff reporter Sebastian Montes that she was a graduate of Winston Churchill High School in Bethesda, Maryland and had earned degrees in criminal justice and sociology from Pfeiffer University in North Carolina.

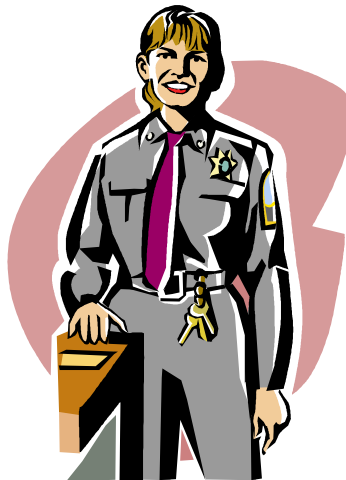
Diane spent two years working with delinquent children before she was recruited to join the county police force.

After more than 10 years patrolling in Wheaton, Rockville and Bethesda, she worked child abuse cases in the department's family services division. She became the Sixth District's community services officer four years ago.

Officer Tillery was the subject of a featured profile in the Montgomery County Department of Police 2006 [Annual Report](#)., commending her for excellent police work by continually “initiating community outreach efforts and building partnerships in order to alleviate community problems and issues.

“As a direct result of her work, 6th District patrol officers have seen a dramatic reduction in the calls for service in many areas. She truly goes above and beyond the call of duty in the spirit of community policing. Officer Tillery has done an incredible job reaching out to all aspects of the community.”

Officer Tillery received the coveted Governor’s Crime Prevention Award for Law Enforcement Officers from Governor Martin O’Malley at the 2007 [Annual Governor’s Crime Prevention](#) ceremony.



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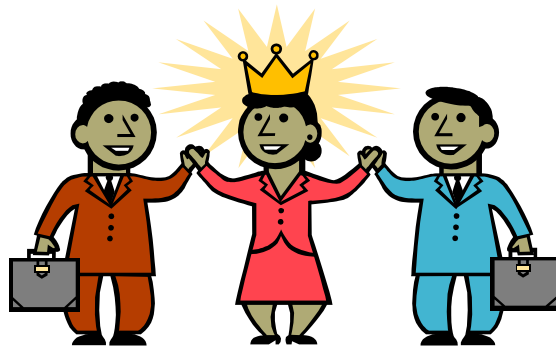
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First Runner Up

**Robert Hydorn
President
Montgomery Village Foundation Board of Directors**



Motivated to run for the MVF Board to do something about the Foundation's sub-standard maintenance and care of the Village's ball fields, parks and recreation facilities, Bob Hydorn was elected to the MVF Board in March of 2006.

During his first year on the Board, he found himself many times the lone concerned voice questioning MVF's failing financial, operating and personnel policies and practices. From his first day as a member of the Board, Hydorn was considered an "enemy of the Foundation" by veterans on the Board and senior staff.

His surprising and dramatic election as Board President by a 5 to 4 vote sent mixed messages of hope and concern to a community very much divided.

Bob's immediate and critical priorities as announced in his President's Message feature in *The Village News* were to: open two-way communication between the Board and the community; bring order, transparency, control and effective management to the Foundation's financial affairs; hire the best Executive Vice President and Director of Finance & Administration available; and improve the quality and management of the Foundation's services.

In his first President's Message feature in *The Village News*, Hydorn listed his e-mail address, Bobhydorn@comcast.net and invited the Village community to send their comments, concerns and complaints to his attention.

At his second meeting as President, Bob called for Board approval of the appointment of an ad hoc Personnel Selection Committee after 288 days of inaction following the resignations of John Zakian and Geraldine Barber.

Despite the challenges to the Selection Committee's composition, legitimacy and competency that followed, the members of the Selection Committee worked tirelessly over the next six months to make the capable leadership team of Dave Humpton and Bill Blum a reality and a blessing for the Village.

As MVF Board President, Bob Hydorn has done a remarkable job of leading the Foundation during an exceedingly difficult time. He has conducted himself with dignity. Thanks to his dedication to the Village, his outgoing personality and accessibility to Village residents, he has begun the renewal of Montgomery Village. Finally, Bob's many community and professional contacts have expanded the influence of the Village in Montgomery County and elevated Village views and concerns before state and county decision-makers in a way we have not seen before.

Second Runner Up

Sebastian Montes
Staff Reporter, *The Gazette*



Information about what's happening in Montgomery Village comes almost exclusively from two sources, *The Village News*, the official newsletter of the Montgomery Village Foundation, and articles written by staff reporter Sebastian Montes for the Gaithersburg-Montgomery Village edition of *The Gazette*.

The Village News is not trusted by many as a source of accurate, fair, useful and critical information. There is a feeling that *The Village News*' editorial, reporting and communication policies are geared to self promotion over effective communication. Its news and features, more than likely, attempt to create an illusion of favorable property conditions, superior service performance by the Foundation's staff and contractors or to justify past and current board decisions and actions.

Since the summer of 2006, Montes' in-depth reporting has brought focus to the Village's crippled governing process, community divides, financial follies, and crumbling infrastructure.

In the seventeen months since John Zakian's resignation, staff reporter Sebastian Montes has written six feature articles that covered the state of the Village's troubled financial affairs, nine articles on the series of embezzlements and missing funds, five on the search and selection of an Executive Vice President and Director of Finance and Administration and five on the controversy over approving the appointment of the Ad Hoc Personnel Search Committee and appointing newly-elected Katherine Gray as Treasurer.

Taken collectively, these articles spurred reform in the Montgomery Village Foundation by focusing attention on the financial and governance issues plaguing the Village. Without this consistent coverage over many months, it is doubtful that Village residents would have ever understood or fully appreciated the crisis on their doorstep. Village residents responded by electing three newcomers to the MVF Board and thus began the first steps to restoring the Village to financial health and managerial excellence with the hiring of a superbly qualified senior staff, Dave Humpton as Executive Vice President, and Bill Blum as Director of Finance and Administration.

