



Montgomery Women
leadership & political action
November 2011

Upcoming Events:

November 4-First Friday Breakfast
December 13th-Holiday Party
December 16h-Committee for Montgomery Breakfast
January 29th-2012 Women's Legislative Briefing

Message from the Chair:
November 1, 2011

Women of Montgomery, I'm sitting here munching on candy corn, and thinking about our awesome program last week, "Breaking into the Boardroom: Can You Do it???" Thanks to **Sara Watkins**, a vice president of Boardroom Bound, a member of Montgomery Women, and our moderator, and **Robyn Kravit**, a member of the Willis Group Holdings board of directors and our distinguished panelist last Thursday evening, I know that the answer is a resounding YES! And I know how to do it, as do the many women who attended last week. This program was put together by the chairs of the Advancement Committee—Jennifer Russel, Kathy Stevens, and Mary Robinson. Thanks to all of you for a fantastic job. This was our first look at an important issue of gender equality—making sure that women have their fair place in the board rooms of publicly traded corporations.

Last month in my message, I was happy to inform you that we had 140 members. This month I am proud to report that Montgomery Women has 149 members!!! Welcome to Susan Burket, Susan Dankoff, Neeta Datt, Aileen Rappaport, Julie Statland, Kate Stookey, Deborah Toll, Lisette Orelia, Carol Plummer, and Dr. DeRionne Pollard, the president of Montgomery College. Yes, for those of you who are counting, that's 10 new members—I've included a member who joined in August, but who has not been officially welcomed! If I have left out anyone this time, please, please email, so that I can include your name next month.

See you this coming Friday, November 4th at the Silver Diner at 7:30 AM for lots of coffee, great gossip, and more. We love our First Friday breakfast!

Montgomery Women is sponsoring a table at the Committee for Montgomery breakfast on Friday, December 16th at the Marriott Conference Center. If you would like to sit at the MW table, please contact Meredith, mkwellington @comcast.net.

And, finally, please mark your calendars for the Holiday Bash—Tuesday, December 13th, 7:00 pm at the Chair's house.

Hope you had a wonderful Halloween, and that, unlike in my household, the candy is safely hidden away!

Meredith

MESSAGE FOR MW MEMBERS - NEW AND RETURNING

This is a reminder either to mail the membership form with your check for \$100 dues to Lisa Neuder, whose address is at the bottom of the membership form, or -- better yet -- bring both to the next of First Friday Breakfast. MW's new membership year starts on September 1st, 2011, and runs until August 31, 2012.

A membership form is attached for your convenience.

Advancement Committee

"Breaking Into the Boardroom: Can you do it??"

Did you know that women make 85% of the purchasing decisions and are nearly 50% of the workforce, however hold just 18% of the corporate board positions at the S & P 100 companies? And yet, this situation persists despite the fact that study after study has shown that more diverse boards are associated with greater company financial performance.

A lively and thoroughly informative panel discussion was held Thursday Oct. 27, 2011, 7 - 9 pm at Montgomery College's Board of Trustees Conference Room. The panelists*, Sara Watkins, Vice President, Board Room Bound and Robyn S. Kravit, CEO, Tethys Research and Board member of the Willis Group Holding Company (and member of their Audit Committee which is generally viewed as an additional responsibility) provided a wealth of information and perspectives to help our members. A poll of the audience (23 of us) revealed that many MW members serve on the boards of non-profits organizations, but very few serve on the boards of private corporations or publically listed companies.

The differences between the various types of Boards were described:

+ Non-profit Organizations: the Boards have a public responsibility to help fulfill the mission of the organization with a major focus on fund-raising. There tend to be more board members, more committees and consensus management.

+ For profit companies (public and private): the boards are responsible to the shareholders and have responsibility for long-term shareholder value. There are fewer board members and fewer committees. The rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and corporate law establish the role and responsibilities of the boards of public companies.

Both types of boards set strategy, advise management, set the proper tone at the top and have fiduciary responsibilities. Financial literacy is required for both. "Noses in, fingers out" is how Robyn described the role of the public company board member.

Robyn outlined her five criteria for a corporate board member:

1. Have a passion for the business. You also need to make sure your personal ethics and the best interests of the shareholders are aligned. Make sure there is a "right fit" between you and the company.

2. Make sure there is a “fit” between you and the other Board members. You must do your due diligence and assure yourself that you will be comfortable working with the other board members.
3. Add value. While “wisdom trumps skill sets” according to Sara, you must bring something to the board, management experience, world view and experience, technical expertise, etc. IT skill sets are lacking on corporate boards at this time.
4. Learning opportunity. While you need to add value, be sure that you can keep learning while you serve on the board.
5. Have some fun. No further explanation needed.

Public corporate board members are often found by executive search firms. It was advised to get to know people at these firms. There is an intensive and lengthy vetting process. Private corporate board members are typically found through networking. It was suggested the board members on nonprofit boards can be excellent conduits to board opportunities in the private sector.

Your resume for a board position should be short and provide career highlights, problems you have solved, achievements and education. Your level of judgment is being assessed. Education at top tier schools is a big plus for the public corporate boards. A company’s annual report and proxy statement which will describe the value each board member brings to the position.

If your background is in government or elected office and you are interested in moving into private sector boards, Robyn suggested starting with a focus on companies which do business with the government, where your experience will bring value. Robyn had extensive corporate management experience in China where she lived for 20 years and gained fluency in the language. When she returned to the US, she first served on some nonprofit boards, including the National Zoo. She was approached by an executive search firm for the Willis Board, where she had served for several years and is on the Audit committee.

Other resources include the National Assoc. of Corporate Directors, the Directors Registry, 3-D Data Base and Network 2000 in Maryland.

It was a most enlightening evening and space permits only the highlights of what we learned. Our sincere thank you to the panelists, organizers and to Montgomery College for hosting the event.

*Lise Perunovich, President, The Park Group & Associates, Inc. was en route but had a flat tire and, unfortunately, was not able to make it.

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Montgomery Women’s next First Friday Power Breakfast will be held on November 4th Plan to join us at our regular gathering. It is informal, so drop in. Please note that the Silver Diner has moved a few blocks north to 12278 Rockville Pike.

Time: ! 7:30 am - 9:00 am

What: ! Power Breakfast

When: ! Friday, November 4, 2011

Where: ! Silver Diner, Rockville, 12276 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

For directions, go to: <http://www.silverdiner.com/restaurants/rockville-silver-diner>

Stay in touch!

Want to know your fellow members?

We have a roster of current members on the website at <http://www.montgomerywomen.org/membership.htm>. To access it, you have to register with the website. Once your dues status is confirmed, you will have access to the list of members.

Tell us your news!

We've got a fantastic newsletter, a website and even a Facebook Fanpage. What we REALLY need are members interested in helping on the Communications Committee. We like to share news about our events ahead of time and provide brief write-ups as follow-up. In addition, we want to reach out to other organizations who might be interested in our work, and we want to connect with members and others interested in supporting women in leadership positions.

Make MontgomeryWomen.org your go-to website for women in leadership!

As you know, our website has plenty of information about our organization and our many events. But did you know that you can also find out about other organizations and their activities in the Forum section? Montgomery Women members involved in other organizations are able to use Montgomerywomen.org to share information and promote events by posting them for all to see.* If you have a job opening or want to get the word out about your own professional and personal transitions, post it to the Forum. The more people use the Forum, the more useful it becomes for all. So think about what you would like to share with the membership and post it to the Forum today. If you have any questions, please contact webmaster@montgomerywomen.org.

*To post an item to the Forum section, sign in at www.montgomerywomen.org (or register to create an account). Post events under 'upcoming events', 'share your news' or 'general discussion.' If you have questions, suggestions or ideas for the Forum section or the website in general, please contact the communications team at webmaster@montgomerywomen.org.

If you are on Facebook, you can also use the Montgomery Women fanpage to share information with the growing list who 'like' our site.

Please consider offering your expertise and leadership in the following positions available in Montgomery County:

Application Deadline	Board Vacancy
11/4/11	Sign Review Board
11/4/11	Mental Health Advisory Committee
11/4/11	Commission on Children and Youth
11/11/11	Commission on People with Disabilities
11/16/11	Solid Waste Advisory Committee

11/16/11 Forest Conservation Advisory Committee
11/16/11 Cable and Communications Advisory Committee
11/16/11 Agricultural Advisory Committee
11/18/11 Firearm Safety Committee
11/18/11 Committee Evaluation and Review Board

Applications may be mailed, faxed to 240-777-2517, or sent via e-mail to
CountyExecutive.Boards@montgomerycountymd.gov