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Bits & Pieces

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Community Sports Hall of Fame set to induct six new members

The Class of 2007 of the Howard County Community Sports Hall of Fame has been announced and once again the 12-member committee, under the direction of Al Harden, has gone back in time choosing six community activists who were instrumental in fashioning many of the recreational programs we enjoy to this day.

The six -- Marie Curry, Paul Donovan, Jim McCauley, Bill McCormack, Jr., Joe Wall and Jim Yedlicka -- will be inducted into the Hall of Fame Oct. 22 at the Ten Oaks Ballroom, in Clarksville, as part of the fifth annual Celebration of Sports. Marie Currie and Jim Yedlicka will be honored posthumously.

I will not go into great detail about the accomplishments of each of these individuals at this time because they will be featured in stories in this newspaper as the Celebration of Sports nears, but here is a quick recap of their impact on our recreational sports programs.

* Marie Currie was the first to organize little league baseball teams for the black communities in Howard County. She created the Jackie Robinson Baseball League.

* Paul Donovan has a long-time involvement with the Columbia Youth Baseball Association and founded the Columbia Reds baseball program.

* Jim McCauley developed the Columbia Basketball Association's instructional clinic and later was key in CBA's girls leagues and travel teams.

* Bill McCormack has coached girls rec soccer for the Soccer Association of Columbia for 33 years and boys rec basketball for CBA for 23 years.

* In 1970, Joe Wall helped start the Columbia Optimist Boys Recreation Association's wrestling program, and he coached in the COBRA football program for 14 years.

* Jim Yedlicka was the director of recreation for the Columbia Association from 1969 to 1977. He planted the seeds that later blossomed into sports programs like SAC and the adult softball leagues.

Tickets for the Celebration of Sports will go on sale in early August and will be available at the rec department headquarters, online at www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP or by calling 410-313-7275. Johnny Holliday, the "Voice of the Maryland Terrapins," will be the keynote speaker.

Divers make quite a splash

There are many people who write off diving as too dangerous. Actually, it is not dangerous if you get the proper training first. Some of that proper training was on display last week at the Forest Hill Swim Club where the Forest Hill divers took on

teams from Anne Arundel County and Catonsville. Forest Hill won both events but what was on display was something that I would characterize more as beautiful and exciting to watch rather than dangerous.

The Central Maryland Diving League has 13 teams, including North St. John's, Forest Hill and West Howard. Each team is 20 to 80 members strong. The divers use a 1-meter board to do all sorts of front, back, reverse, twists and inward dives with different positions and varying degrees of difficulty.

Diving requires a great deal of mental discipline. It is a difficult sport and often the reward, the score earned, does not match the level of commitment, yet the diver climbs up on the board and tries again.

North St. John's has turned into a diving dynasty. The Blue Marlins have won the CMDL Blue Division five consecutive years with an eye-popping overall record of 23-1. For the past three seasons, the Blue Marlins have finished with an unblemished 6-0 record under the coaching of Jeff Salgado and Maureen Theis.

Forest Hill has an aggressive diving learning program with kids ages 3 to 18 having weekly diving sessions under the direction of James Madison University sophomore Danny Drude.

The CMDL league championships are coming up this weekend. North St. John's will send 26 of its 47 divers to the championship, which is strictly for individual honors. Forest Hill is sending 10.

If you ever have the opportunity to watch a diving meet, be sure to do so. You will be impressed.

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