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Silverton, gateway to Silver Falls and The Oregon Garden, and Mt. Angel, home of the Oktoberfest and the Mt. Angel Abbey

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News

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

First Citizen banquet has largest turnout yet

BY ANGELINA MORGAN

Appeal Tribune

February 15

SILVERTON – The red carpet was rolled out Saturday for more than two-dozen of **Silverton's** shining stars at the 33rd First Citizen banquet at The Oregon Garden Pavilion.

A spotlight beamed through the night sky as community members were awarded for their service, dedication and generosity. Even the paparazzi (Portrait Express) showed up for the glitz and glamour.

"It's a nice social evening in **Silverton,**" dinner guest Susy Riches said. "It recognizes people who give to the community and it's a wonderful evening to spend with the community."

Area musicians Dennis Bierman, Tim Duffy, Scott Napper, Steve Prager, Michael White and Sprague High School junior Carolyn Gage performed a rendition of "Moon River" as people mingled with neighbors, peers, and even cutouts of Marilyn Monroe and the Three Stooges.

Master of Ceremonies Chuck White gave a warm welcome to the 335 award winners, family members and friends who attended the affair before a five-course feast was unveiled by Wooden Nickel catering.

Service club awards

Hispanas Unidas

Mary Carmen Cressey

Homer Davenport Days

Richard Carlson

Kiwanis

Judy Schmidt

Lion's Club

Russ Gilmore

Silver Falls Family YMCA

Denny Stoll

Service club member recognitions were given to 11 individuals from local organizations. **Silverton** Mayor Ken Hector presented Judy Schmidt the **Silverton** Together Volunteer of the Year award. Hector said the former **Silverton** Union High School cheerleader has been a long-time cheerleader for **Silverton** Together and has been instrumental in helping start parenting support classes.

"She has been a great liaison in the community," Hector said. "Her positive and go-get-'em attitude is truly infectious."

Schmidt, the volunteer services director at **Silverton** Hospital, said the award – and **Silverton** Together – mean a lot to her.

"I think we are lucky in **Silverton** to have an organization like that," she said.

Silver Falls School District rang up six awards for its staff. Eugene Field School teacher Karen Hatteberg received Elementary Teacher of the Year. Eugene Field Principal Catherine Brosnan credited Hatteberg with a big heart and creativity in the classroom.

"She sincerely cares about students," Brosnan said. "She makes sure each kid is working to their potential. She has the knack of lifting the spirits of whoever she is around."

Kevin Palmer presented the Middle School Teacher of the Year award to Butte Creek School history teacher John Atwell. Atwell has been teaching in the district for 30 years.

"He has done it all and done it well," Palmer said. "He is a Butte Creek icon."

Office staff member Mary Maciejewski of **Silverton** High School is this year's High School Classified Employee of the year.

"She is the hub of the wheel at the Pine Street campus," vice principal Bill Perkins said.

Long-time P.E. and health teacher Tracy Babitzke was honored for 29 years of dedicated instruction.

"I cannot describe to you how amazing she is," Perkins said. "Every time I go in that gym it is uplifting for me. The kids love Tracy Babitzke. What they get in there is way more than physical education."

Alan Klaus, Elementary Classified Employee of the Year, and Victor Point leadership teacher and Middle School Classified Employee of the Year Cheryl Sprauer were also given awards.

The band played a few melodies during a short break, giving guests just enough time to grab a handful of petit fours and gear up for the major awards.

Frank and Bernadette Mele were slow to accept their accolades for the Distinguished Service award.

"You are the people who make the program," said Bernadette, SACA director. "You either refresh our spirits or donate funds."

The audience responded to the couple's modesty with a standing ovation.

Silver Grille owner and chef Jeff Nizlek accepted the award for Business of the Year with his wife, Naomi. Kyle Palmer, who presented the honor, said the restaurant does a great job drawing patrons from outside the **Silverton** area and he "brings to light the quality and the abundance of locally grown foods under our eyes."

Silverton High School senior and this year's Future First Citizen award winner Kelsey Hupp thanked her family and the community for all their support and all they have taught her about life.

There was hardly a dry eye in the room when the Lifetime Achievement award was presented to the family of Don Dolan, who passed away in September from cancer. His family accepted the award for his sustained community service.

Schmidt, who presented the award and whose son was on Dolan's baseball team, said Dolan carried with him a long list of services that couldn't be matched.



Angelina Morgan / **Appeal** Tribune

First Citizen Darby Hector smiles at her dad, Bill Duncan, after accepting her award at the 33rd First Citizen banquet at The Oregon Garden Pavilion Saturday.

Silverton Area
Community Aid
Suzy McGowan

Silverton Art
Association
Dave Strand

Silverton Country
Historical Society
Erica Toler

Silverton Rotary
Dennis Dalisky

Silverton Together
Judy Schmidt

Zenith Women's
Club

Rose Abrahamson

"Don has just always been around and he is just a great guy," she said. "When I was asked (to announce the award) I was proud to do it but it would be hard to do."

Dolan's son Tim fought back tears as he shared about his father.

"He was like the point guard in basketball," Tim said. "He made the people around him better. He connected with people who were 6 years old, 60 years old and older."

First Citizen Darby Hector hopped on stage with the support of her extended family just a glance away.

Following in the steps of her husband, Ken, who won the award in 2003, Hector took her time in the spotlight to pinpoint areas for improvement throughout the **Silverton** area. She shared with the audience three hopes she has for **Silverton** in the next year.

One: finish the Pine Street campus. Hector is a SHS graduate who said having all four grades under one roof was an important part of her high school career.

Two: Hector encouraged the community to support downtown **Silverton**.

Three: Support The Oregon Garden. Hector led a Girl Scout troop for 12 years. Her group donated the first \$1,000 to The Oregon Garden and she wants to see the investment continue to blossom.

This year's attendance trumped all banquet attendance numbers from the past, said **Silverton** Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stacy Palmer. And the company was heartening.

"This year I was connected to so many people," she said. "I'm sure half the people in the audience could say the same thing. You feel so lucky when you are connected to a community."



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Future First Citizen Kelsey Hupp makes her way through the buffet line at the Night of Shining Stars banquet Saturday at The Oregon Garden.

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