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News from Northville, Northville Township, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Canton

Wednesday, November 10, 2004



Velvet S. McNeil / The Detroit News

Covington Square residents Larry Ristovski, left, Shelly Babcock and John Silagy helped improve the flow of water of a pond, which won the subdivision an award from Canton Township.

Canton Township rewards those who think green

More than 50 awards were given for the best designs, landscaping

By Jenny King / Special to The Detroit News

CANTON TOWNSHIP — A couple of years ago some of the residents in Covington Square voiced concerns that the detention pond near their homes may not have been draining properly.

In all likelihood, none of them ever thought that their efforts to improve the flow of water in the natural setting would result in an environmental excellence award from the city in 2004.

"We were quite surprised when I was notified we won a design excellence award," said John Silagy, president of the association for the 141-home subdivision.

This year, in its second annual event, Canton Township handed out more than 50 awards for design excellence in landscaping and architecture to individuals, subdivisions and businesses.

The Council for Community Excellence, the event sponsor, began accepting nominations from Canton Township residents last spring. The council's nominating subcommittee sifted through some 145 suggestions.

Final decisions in a eight categories were made by professionals in fields related to landscaping and architectural design.

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Cherry Hill Village won the Medallion Award, a top recognition in the event. The Medallion Award recognizes a development for overall excellence from the planning stage through construction and completion.

Dubbed a neotraditional development, Cherry Hills Village comprises single-family homes and condominiums of various sizes from four builders.

Ellen and Bob Norgren were the fifth family to move into a brand-new home in Cherry Hill Village 2 1/2 years ago.

The Norgrens won the landscape design award for a single-family home.

The couple didn't have much of a choice when it came to landscaping. Although they were pleased with the builder's choices of trees and shrubs, Ellen Norgren has been busy pulling out some and replacing them with favorite plants and flowers.

Their 1,750-square-foot 19th-century-style home and its setting won the Norgrens a design award that took them by surprise.

"When I told my mother about it, she kind of choked up and said, 'All your hard work paid off,'" Ellen Norgren said.

Delphine Marshall chairs the Council for Community Excellence and its awards committee.

Marshall said the committee divided Canton into quarters. Members of a nominating subcommittee began to scour established and newer subdivisions and neighborhoods in search of outstanding building and ground designs.

"We were all looking for properties that jump out at you," Marshall said.

Silagy said the Covington Square pond project got underway in late 2002. The homeowners put together a pond committee that worked closely with the city to make drainage improvements. Homeowners had an opportunity to review the city's proposal and look at plans.

"At a meeting, we agreed to share the \$15,000 expense through our yearly dues," Silagy said.

Silagy said the plantings in the redeveloped pond area is expected to mature in another year or two. Meanwhile, Covington Square residents can admire their design excellence award, which hangs outside and is lighted at night.

"We're always looking for ways to improve our awards process," Marshall said.

"We are still new at this, and we want to make it better each year," she said.

Jenny King is a Metro Detroit free-lance writer.

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