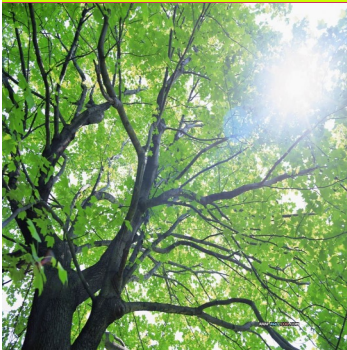


Summer 2015



# The History of DuFief



The 1853 stone marking the original du Fief Farm now stands in John L. du Fief’s front yard in Rockville.

*Continued from page 1 of the Winter 2015 issue of the Readwood.*

*By Linde Fuller with the help of Pat Andersen of the Montgomery County Historical Society and John L. du Fief III of Rockville, MD.*

John Lawrence DuFief (1817-1877), son to Cherubim du Fief and grandson to Nicholas Henri Gouin, Lord du Fief, moved to Montgomery County in 1853 with his wife Catharine Amelia Talbot of Prince George’s County. They had eight children: six daughters and two sons. It seems that each subsequent generation had a John L. DuFief, now named John Louis and again spelled du Fief. The youngest of them is John Louis du Fief IV who was seven years old at the time of a family reunion that took place in 1993 at the C&O Canal to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John L. du Fief Sr. (1893-1956). Of the 42 members of the du Fief family who lived in Montgomery County at that time, 34 assembled at the Canal on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1993 to take a boat ride. There were three of his children, thirteen grandchildren, and eighteen great-grandchildren. At that occasion, John L. du Fief Jr. (born 1930) said of his father: “He was a very calm and gentle man. He taught us how to be independent and make our best effort. He used to say: If something is worth doing, it’s worth doing it right the first time. His words have guided me all through my life.”

The son of John L. du Fief Jr. and father of John L. du Fief IV is John L. du Fief III, born in 1958. He lives in Montgomery County and is owner of John L. du Fief, Inc. True to family tradition, he is a builder of custom homes. In the fall of 2000, John L. du Fief III and other members of the family attended the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DuFief Elementary School.

John Lawrence DuFief suffered from an “undisclosed” illness during the last ten years of his life and was forced to sell various parcels of his land beginning in 1866. A 95-acre tract of land called “AS GOOD AS WE COULD GET” was owned from around that period until 1966 by various members of the Mills family. According to a deed recorded on June 8, 1966 that tract of land was then conveyed from Ernest M. Mills et al. to Herman A. Schmidt and Phyllis A. Schmidt, his wife. From the land records it appears that Herman and Phyllis Schmidt were the last owners of the land before it was sold by Phyllis A. Schmidt to Preston Venture Limited Partnership in 1970 and then developed by Miller & Smith, Inc. for the construction of DuFief, beginning in 1971. Almost ten acres were donated to Montgomery County for the construction of DuFief Elementary School. The name of the school was changed before it opened from the original “Avalon” to “DuFief” to pay homage to the history of the du Fief family.

DUFIEF HOMES ASSOCIATION

READWOOD

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### Special points of interest:

- *DuFief History*
- *Artist in Residence Column*
- *The Good Ole Days*

# Artist in Residence — An Actor's Journey to DuFief and Beyond

by **Harley Venton**

I grandfath.....  
'Mothered' into our neighborhood by marrying the lovely Ann Oliver Cannon Venton (formerly Finch). Ann had been looking for a place to bring up her and her husband's twin boys (now in their 30s) and they selected beautiful surroundings, indeed.

So, how does a fella with a 22-year active career as a working Screen Actors' Guild/Actors' Equity Member end up in the wilds of Montgomery County, MD? Well, 17 years ago I was living in LA where I was doing a fair amount of Guest Starring roles on nighttime television. My wife at the time, and mother of our then 2-year old twins (yep... twins! a boy and a girl, in our case) suggested that perhaps her hometown of Annapolis, MD, would be a more gracious environment for the kids to grow up in than Hollywood. (What a crazy notion, eh? Annapolis a more wholesome place to raise children than Hollywood.)

She was, let us say, persuasive. So east we came. As there was no practical way for me to make my living outside a major entertainment area offering fulltime work, we agreed that she would go to work and I would become a stay-at-home Dad. (Big ... Big ... SMILE!) This accounts for the 17-year hiatus in my professional acting life. Now that my two bouncing babies have bounced out of high school and into college, I fully intend to pursue the wonderful and vibrant showbiz opportunities in Film, Television and Theater here in the DC Metro Area.

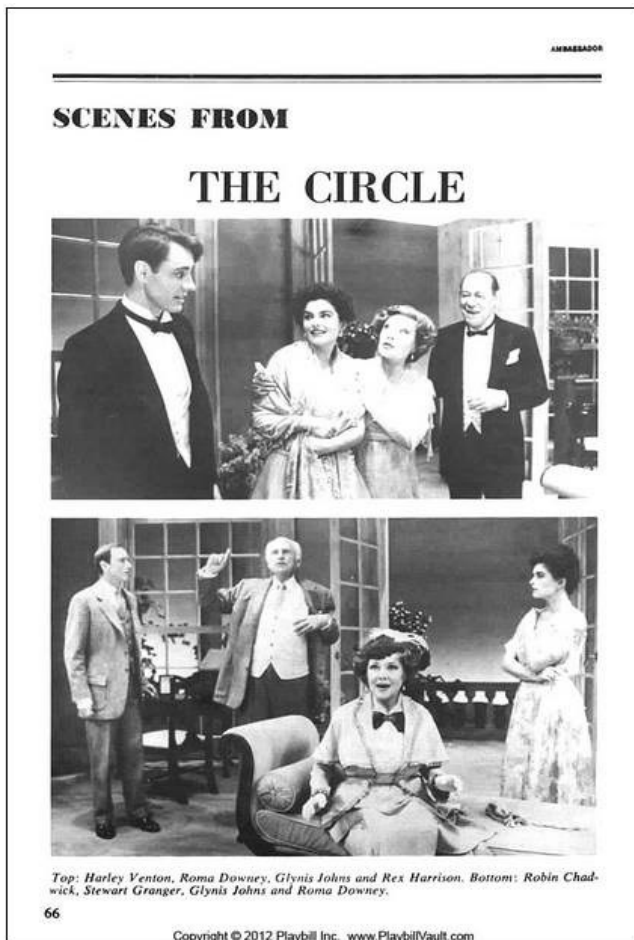
But, how did it all begin? Well, I caught the acting bug in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Sitting in homeroom one morning, an announcement informed us that if we paid 20 cents we could get out of two periods of class to see something called a "play." (Hey, two periods of class is two periods of class, eh?) It was my first experience of live, fully produced theater and I was hooked.

For the rest of Junior High School and throughout Senior, I took every opportunity to ply the craft. (Note: In both schools, Junior HS in Hibbing, MN, and Senior HS in Jamestown, ND, I was incredibly fortunate in some key teachers and in school systems that supported and valued the Arts.) I then pursued a BFA in Theater at a small Drama Department at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. As it happened, the entire faculty was expatriate stage professionals, and so I got a level of training unrivaled by any program in the country. I was then blessed and privileged to achieve a Bush Fellowship at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, a huge theater town.

The fellowship provided a full ride through an accelerated MFA program and completed with a season as an Actors' Equity Journeyman at the prestigious Tony Award winning regional stage, the Guthrie Theater. This got me my Equity Union Card and paved the way for me to enter the professional theater scene in New York City. Immediately upon arriving, the marketplace quickly recognized my Shakespearean, classical acting training, and promptly put me on a soap opera, the Guiding Light. So, for two years, I played earnest, stalwart, good guy lawyer, Derek Colby. (Note: worst type of role to play on a daytime drama? A GOOD GUY! Give me Villainy!) While on the Guiding Light I secured my first Broadway credit by understudying the two male roles in Beth Henley's "Crimes of the

Heart." Then, Night Time Television came a-callin'. I played Susan Saint James' feckless but charming ex-husband on "Kate and Allie," also starring the wickedly witty Jane Curtin.

My first love has always been the live theatre and I fulfilled a lifelong stage actor's dream by landing my own, featured role for



my second Broadway credit. The play was an English Drawing Room Comedy called "The Circle," by Somerset Maugham: a really good part, but the delight was working with three lions of... well, two lions and a lioness of the theatrical world, Sir Rex Harrison, Glynnis Johns, and Stewart Granger. Oh, and my lady love in the production was played by pre-"Touched by an Angel" Roma Downey.

*continued on next page*

## An Actor's Journey to DuFief and Beyond, *continued from previous page*

But, newly married and with family in mind, a move to LA and it's plentiful, well-paying TV work beckoned. In my years there I did 30 to 40 guest-starring roles on such shows as *Seinfeld* (a scene with lovely and lively Julia Louis-Dreyfus in an episode titled "The Limo"); "*Cybill*" with Cybill Shepard, "*Murder She Wrote*;" "The

I came very close to landing one of the regular roles on "Murphy Brown" with Candice Bergen. She later saw to it that I got a guest-starring role on an episode in which I played one of her many hapless boy-friends —classy lady, Candice (who has a great biography out right now, btw).



Practice" (opposite Isabella Rosellini — don't tell Ann); "JAG," "Matlock," "Who's the Boss?," "LA Law," etc. (For a more complete list of credits, I recommend the entertainment web site IMDB).

My biggest flirtation with television fame, and this is documented: It was myself OR Bruce Willis for the role of David Addison on the series "Moonlighting," also with Cybill Shepard. Sigh... All par for the course in the Entertainment Biz, and, hats off to

Bruce, who was great in the role and certainly made the most of the opportunity.

Feature film work was more elusive. I did make a brief appearance in "Clear and Present Danger" with

Harrison Ford, and I had quite a nice scene in "Sleeping With the Enemy," the Julia Roberts film.

My last fully professional job actually came while I was residing in Annapolis. My NYC agents called and I journeyed up to audition for an episode of "Law & Order." I ended up playing the murdering defendant, a crazed hockey dad ultimately convicted, owing to the good offices of Sam Waterston and company.

So, it has been a hurly-burly, interesting, sometimes exciting journey to pastoral Silent Valley Lane and, to be honest, I have to say, I couldn't be happier to be here.

I'll leave you with an old, traditional actors' farewell at the end of the run of a play:

(Fondly) "Write, if you get work!"

*Harley*



### Nextdoor Dufief

If you have not yet joined Nextdoor Dufief, consider doing so.

The site has multiple options including classifieds, crime and safety concerns, free items, lost and found, as well as recommendations regarding services such as handyman, construction, etc. There are no fees involved. If you try it and find you do not want to continue, it is very easy to unsubscribe. In order to join, you must be referred by a neighbor, which limits access by unknown persons.

Please e-mail Pam Weld at [brandyhallpam@gmail.com](mailto:brandyhallpam@gmail.com) if you are interested, and she will be glad to invite you. Or ask your neighbors about it. Any DuFief resident who is already a member can issue an invitation.

# 2015 DuFief Community Picnic

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**SAVE THE DATE:**      **Sunday, September 27, 2015**  
**1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**RAIN DATE:**            **Saturday, October 3, 2015**  
**1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

***Gather the family, come join your neighbors,  
and celebrate DuFief at our community pond!***

**SET-UP AND CLEAN-UP HELP NEEDED!**  
(SSL hours provided to high-school students)

**SAVE THE DATE**

Please contact Jeanette Repie at [jmrepie@aol.com](mailto:jmrepie@aol.com)

## Treasurer's Report

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By **Brian Frank**, *DuFief HOA Treasurer*

As of May 27, 2015 the Board has collected annual dues from 269 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 88%). The annual assessments that we use to maintain our common areas in order to keep the DuFief neighborhood a popular area for homebuyers **are not optional**. Every household must pay the annual dues. The original notice for 2015 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2015.

Any homeowners that have not paid their dues are subject to a potential lawsuit, which will include a request for interest and attorney's fees and may result in a lien on the property.

We have been very successful in collecting dues. All assessments have been collected for 2010 and all years prior. There is one home that has not paid dues for 2011

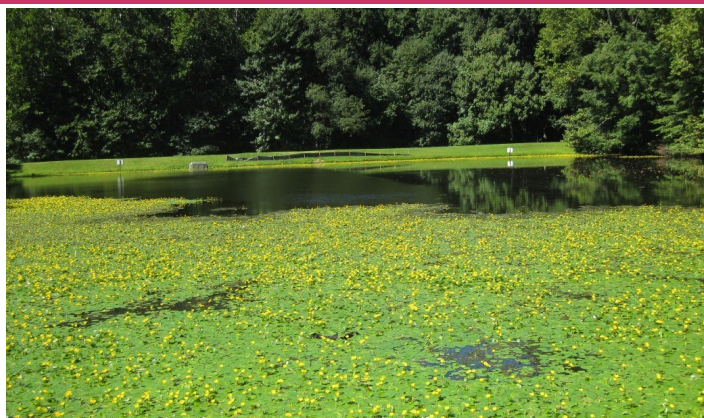
and 2012, two homes that have not paid dues for 2013 and 2014.

The Board does not enjoy having to take neighbors to court; however, the homeowner assessments are no different than having to pay real estate taxes on your property.

For those of you who have paid your annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". For those of you who have not paid the 2015 dues in the amount of \$190.00, please do so.

If you have questions or would like to discuss your annual assessments, please feel free to contact me at 240-606-5100.

***We have collected  
88% of dues for 2015***



# New DuFief HOA Board Members—Introductions

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*By Eli Hassid, President*

As the newly elected president of the DuFief HOA, I would like to introduce myself. Originally from Houston, TX, I've lived in the DC area for 11 of the last 14 years. I work in Rockville for Guggenheim Investments as an Investment Accountant.

At the end of May, my wife Nicole and I will celebrate our inaugural year as first-time homeowners. The great schools, quiet location, and natural setting were the primary reasons we were so immediately drawn to DuFief. We love that we are close enough to so much to do, but nestled away where we can relax and truly feel as though we have escaped into nature after a long day.

It is exciting to highlight the improvements we are seeing in DuFief, including the new website and enhanced entrance to the community. We have also had a handrail added to the steps that lead to the pond, a row of pavers installed adjacent to those that already existed, and the mulch replenished in and around the playground set.

Spring is here and summer is around the corner, and with the beautiful weather I hope you get to take advantage of the walking trails in and around DuFief. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the HOA Board. And we hope to see you at an upcoming meeting this year.

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*By Al Fier, Vice-President*

As your newly elected Vice President of the DuFief HOA Board, I would like to introduce my family and myself. My wife Naomi and I and our two sons, Justin and Aaron, have lived in DuFief since March 1986. We moved from Denver Colorado, transferring with my company.

We chose DuFief because we love the California-design homes and the trees. It was an added bonus to be within walking distance to the elementary school. Our boys have grown up and moved out, we are still here, we love the neighborhood, especially in the spring and fall.

I recently became a grandfather, in August 2014, which was when I decided to retire as a defense contract business development director, after 39 years. Naomi and I take turns watching our granddaughter on Tuesdays and Thursdays while her parents are at work, and we love it, especially now walking her through the neighborhood. When we first moved into DuFief I joined the ARC and even chaired it. Since retiring and because I care about DuFief I decided to join the Board and accept the role of Vice President.

I wish you a wonderful summer and I hope you take advantage of all our community has to offer, especially the pond and beautiful trees. If you have any questions, or if you would like to volunteer to be on the ARC, do not hesitate to contact any of the HOA Board members.

*By Linde Fuller, Readwood Editor*

Like so many of us here in DuFief, I am an “original owner.” Even then, in 1972, when Route 28 was still a two-lane country road and there was nothing much except meadows and cows between here and 270, DuFief felt like an oasis of green leaves and brown tree trunks and wood-sided houses which, in their various shades of brown and with their large windows, seemed to be part of the landscape. \$54K was a whole lot more than the \$25K that we would have had to spend for a red brick house elsewhere in the area, but it was well worth it. We had come from Europe just a few years before and knew about Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer who considered architecture a visual art form and an expression of the time and environment we live in. A DuFief house came as close to any contemporary house in the Washington area that we were able to afford. Our daughter and son were just the right age to start Kindergarten and first grade at the soon-to-open new and exciting DuFief School.

I am still here and things have changed, but I still love it here, and there are still some corners of DuFief that reflect the spirit of the original architectural philosophy. As a Board member and current editor of the Readwood—for which my 27 years of writing and reviewing papers and books as an economist at NIST were somewhat of a preparation—I do what I can to remind DuFief homeowners how special our development is and that all of us should make every effort to keep it that way.

# The Good Ole Days

By Susan Luff

“Are you crazy? Spending forty-nine thousand dollars for a house! That’s almost fifty-thousand dollars. And why would you want to live way out there anyway? We used to go out there for a family picnic for the day at the little park off Rt. 28. It’s too far out.” That’s what friends said about the plan to move to DuFief in 1972.

The house was a hole in the ground with only its beginning foundation laid. The foundation was nestled in a half-moon cut in the generous towering expanse of oaks, tulip poplars, maples, and dogwoods. We drove from Laurel every week to check on the progress and have a picnic lunch at Muddy Branch stream.

We traveled on I-270 which had a total of six lanes. Now there are twelve. Known as 70S, its name was changed to I-270 in 1975. As we exited onto Rt. 28, the car cruised past the yellow and red Shell station. Just up the hill, the graceful branches of a weeping willow cascading down welcomed us into the country. We could feel the heat of day cool down just a bit.

We chose the neighborhood for its contemporary architecture, the woods and the quiet. Nature was a continual visitor. A pair of regal, white and black, red-crested pileated woodpeckers showed up to peck out the bugs from a decaying log. A covey of quail waddled by through the woods one day. Leaving the deck door open was just too tempting. A possum with its pig-like pink nose came in to nibble the bag of cat food that sat close to the door. Before the rabies scare, the raccoon that regularly came to the door would receive a cracker. One day, his little face showed up. “Oh no, I don’t have any crackers!” Uncertain he would like it, I put out a small dish of yogurt. His cute little hand slowly scooped every bit of it into his mouth. One Christmas morning, right by the railing of the deck, a tree, each branch cloaked in snow, hosted the brilliance of seven red cardinals.

After we moved in, we’d get up in the morning and look out the windows—absolutely nothing was going on out there. Huh? Well, that’s why we moved here. Then, the children grew up a bit and the red-and-yellow big wheels moved in. Now, it was waking up to the clattering thunder of the wheels careening down the hill of Happy Choice Lane. Winters were spent with both adults and kids flying down the hill on saucers over the snow between the houses. We built jumps in the snow and occasionally blasted into a tree. Coming in for hot chocolate made for a perfect day.

I walked in the woods and never saw anyone, unlike today when it is odd not to meet someone, often with a dog. Once, down the path ahead, to my surprise, I saw a man. I shivered as I saw the rifle over his shoulder. I stepped behind a tree and peeked at him. He soon

shifted the rifle from his shoulder, placed it on the ground and opened it into a tripod. He and I enjoyed a great conversation about all his encounters with nature.

The beaver were generally visible only through their work. Some trees had big chunks removed with distinct, carefully placed teeth marks. Other trees were felled, with their pointy, gnawed ends resting by the stream. I would stand amazed at the architecture of the beavers’ dams with the crisscross of astutely placed logs. How sad it was to see these dams washed away after a big rainstorm. Yet, just a few days later there would be signs of a new dam going up. One early morning, with sunlight dappling the rocks of Muddy Branch, Linde Fuller, my neighbor and I saw a baby beaver with its flat paddle tail in miniature floating down the stream. When Rt. 28 was widened, a beaver was killed, the resident of a lodge out by Rt. 28 and DuFief. After that time, beavers were no longer seen anywhere.

If nature was plentiful in 1972, shopping and restaurants were scarce. Our nearby solitary grocery store, the Safeway, was where the Medstar Health Center now sits at the Potomac Valley Center. It was quite basic then. Once, while shopping at the Safeway, I was unable to find Karo syrup for a pecan pie. The manager proudly took me to the shelf and handed me a bottle of maple syrup. We had access to pizza and Chinese food. It really was the country out here.



Muddy Branch Road was a narrow up-and-down, two-lane road with only one lane across a small bridge where the road dipped down to a low point. This low point is likely where Muddy Branch Road now meets Great Seneca Highway, which of course didn’t exist in 1972. After a heavy rain, there would be a surprise. The bridge would be flooded over and impassable, necessitating a U-turn and a disappointing detour home. Then, Muddy Branch Road was without any of the commercial stores we have now. It was bordered by the Nike Missile

*continued on next page*

## The Good Ole Days, *continued from previous page*



*Washingtonian Golf Course/Nike Missile Site/Belward Farm 1973*

site, the Washingtonian Country Club and fields. It was a route to the Feed Store and later to Lake Forest Mall. Rockville Pike was the hub for everything. Lake Forest Mall waited until 1978 to come into being. The town of Rockville with its late 19th and 20th century businesses was removed and replaced with an odd, failure-to-thrive mall that was limping along soon after its opening in 1972.

Miss Barnes, a tall, rugged woman was often seen cutting the grass outside the white white fence of her family's beautiful family farm that sits at the corner of Rt. 28 and Muddy Branch Road. Once up close, I saw her earthy, hard-working fingers and her tan, leathery skin at the diner, a small white building on Rt. 28 near the Potomac Garden Center.

As Rt. 28 was a total of two lanes, cars heading toward I-270 were scrunched into a tight, single-lane, slow-moving chain. When reaching I-270, with its three lanes heading to D.C., the tortoise pace continued. Once on a blustery winter day of deep grey skies and a few snowflakes, it took two and a half hours to make the trip to my job at George Washington Hospital. I could have driven to Delaware in that time and felt as if

I had. Things haven't changed; the D.C. area still goes into a panicked paralysis at just hearing the word snow.

Back then, one could make that left-hand turn from DuFief Drive onto Rt. 28 without looking; there were so few cars. Once, while traveling up to the Safeway, a brown-and-black horse stood proudly in the middle of the road. I pulled over, hopped out and led this willing boy by his halter over to the side of the road. As I walked past a driveway to a small farm, a woman with her yellow and white apron ruffles came running down toward us. "Oh, there you are! I've been looking all over for you. Where have you been?" She and I laughed together at the beauty of his road-surveying adventure and relief that he was found and safe.



*Quince Orchard Road 1978*

The trees that towered over our houses still tower and have a forty-year growth in girth. It is so peaceful to leave the intensity of all that surrounds to re-enter this natural sanctuary. A study found that patients who can view a tree from their hospital room use less pain medication. Every time I visit an inviting place, I think maybe I could move there. But the woods with their sounds and smells where I have been walking for forty-three years call me back home.

## DuFief Architecture—Contemporary Doors

By **Chuck Caldwell**

If you are looking for contemporary exterior doors, the ThermaTru Pulse series is the style of door that would be more suitable for DuFief homes than the colonial, raised-panel door styles that are used by many homeowners as replacements for the original flat-panel doors:

<http://www.thermatru.com/products/entry/fiberglass-entry-doors/plf/index.aspx>

Above is the link for this company's brochure. The Pulse doors begin on page 222. Depending upon the specific model within the Pulse product line, these doors appear to be available in both fiberglass and steel and can be ordered through Lowe's as well as a number of other local sources. I am not suggesting these are the only suitable doors. However, I think this manufacturer offers appropriate styles that may serve as a general guide for DuFief homeowners.

**DuFief  
Homes  
Association**

**DuFief Homes Association Board**  
board@dufief.org 240-242-9678

**Mailing Address:  
PO Box 3034  
North Potomac, MD 20885**

**[www.dufief.org]**



***DuFief HOA Board of Directors:***

*President:* Eli Hassid — EMHassid@gmail.com  
*Vice President:* AFier1948@hotmail.com  
*Treasurer:* Brian Frank — schmedbrf@yahoo.com  
*Secretary:* Jeanette Repie — jmrepie@aol.com

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John Su—poohlo10@yahoo.com  
Pam Weld—jackpam84@gmail.com  
William Washington—bobmotku@gmail.com  
Linde Fuller—(Readwood Editor) fullersk@verizon.net  
Jean-Louis Staudenmann—(ARC Committee Chair) jlst@nist.gov

***ARC Committee Members:***

Herman S. Basra—hbasra@gmail.com  
Pooja Rathore—pkrathore@gmail.com

***Webmaster:*** Barbara Brenkworth—brenkworth@gmail.com

## Announcements

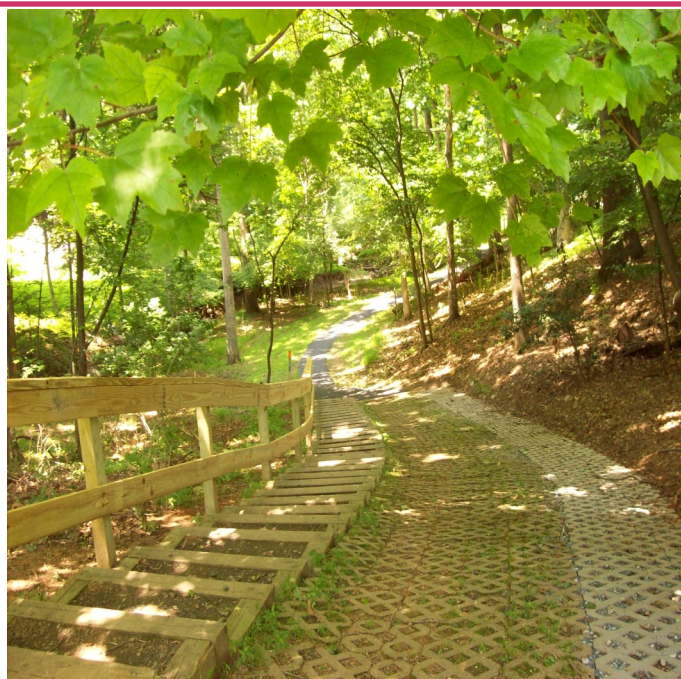
### Welcome New Board Members!

Three new members—Al Fier, Linde Fuller, and Eli Hassid—see introductions above—were elected to the DuFief Board at the Annual HOA Meeting in February.

Eli Hassid agreed to serve as President of the Board and Al Fier as Vice-President. Linde Fuller will continue as editor of the Readwood. We would like to thank Bill Golumbskie for his service as president and Pam Weld as vice-president during the past year.

Barbara Brenkworth will continue as the webmaster for the DuFief HOA website. Under her able stewardship the website has become more attractive and informative. Let Barbara know if you have any ideas for adding content or making other improvements.

**Note:** *The Readwood was printed at cost as a community service by AlphaGraphics in Gaithersburg.*



*New railing and pavers along the steps leading to the pond.*



We Want You to Know About

## ***The MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES***

Montgomery County recognizes that a substantial proportion of all its citizens now live in condominium and homeowner associations, and in housing cooperatives, generally called "common ownership communities." In order to serve better the special needs of these communities, to act as their advocate, and to maintain and improve the quality of life in these communities, the County created the Commission on Common Ownership Communities. The Commission operates under the authority of Chapter 10B of the County Code.

The Commission has 3 basic duties:

***Education:*** the Commission provides free information to both members and to governing bodies about their rights and duties under Maryland law, as well as advice on how to properly operate the association and to avoid complaints. Among other tools, it offers a "Manual and Resource Guide" for boards of directors, and detailed information on architectural control, assessments, and meetings. It publishes a newsletter summarizing recent developments affecting common ownership communities. Commissioners will also speak to communities and their boards on request and welcome invitations to do so.

***Legislation:*** the Commission advocates for common ownership communities concerning proposed laws and regulations at the local and State level.

***Dispute resolution:*** the Commission can hear and resolve certain disputes between members of the communities and their governing bodies, and its decisions are legally binding on the parties. Copies and easy-to-read summaries of its decisions are posted on its website and reviewed in its newsletter.

The Commission is composed of 15 volunteers who are appointed for 3-year terms. 8 members must be residents of common ownership communities and the other 7 must be professionals who work with the communities, such as property managers, lawyers, developers and realtors. Every Fall, the County publishes a request for applicants to the Commission to replace those whose terms are due to expire.

For more information on the Commission and its services, visit its website at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccoc](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccoc). If you have questions, CCOC prefers to be contacted by email at: [CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov). To receive information by email about CCOC news and events, sign up for them by going to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and following these links: 1. "I Want To;" 2. "Register, re-serve, enroll;" 3. "eSubscription;" 4. "Create an Account;" 5. "Consumer Protection;" 6. "CCOC."