

Summer 2016



DUFIEF HOMES ASSOCIATION

READWOOD

President's Message

By **Eli Hassid**, DuFief HOA President

Dear Community,

Spring seems to have skipped us and we are digging our way into summer. I hope 2016 has been great for all so far. This part of the year is particularly enjoyable as it marks the time we step outside and start tending to our gardens, yards, and seasonal house projects. This is also the time that nature's little friends (bees, spiders and ants) start making their presence known. If you use bug spray, be sure to use the kind that doesn't harm bees and other pollinators. In keeping with the message of tending to the outside, when we receive higher-than-usual amounts of rain and warmer-than-average temperatures, the grass tends to grow quickly; so please take that into consideration when planning the frequency of cutting your lawn as a well kept lawn goes a lawn way!

Some of you may notice that we had the county repair the patch of road on Coles Chance Road in front of the entrance to the pond. We hope many of you and your children will take time to enjoy our beautiful pond and the renovated playground. And thank you for making good use of the trash can, which gets emptied regularly to keep the area clean.

Last but not least, on behalf of the Board, I want to thank Jeanette Repie for all the work she has done for the community over the past several years. During her time on the HOA Board, Jeanette, as Secretary of the Board, planned and coordinated the community picnic every year. She also solicited bids and handled the contracts with the landscaping companies that service DuFief – no small task! And she always volunteered for extra jobs that came up. We will miss Jeanette and her enthusiasm for and dedication to our community.

Wishing everyone a great summer,

Eli Hassid

From One Bird-Lover to Another

By **Marilyn Candler**

It seems like a good idea to throw your old crusts and stale bread out the back door for the birds. But please don't do it. Birds' digestive systems are not made for digesting carbohydrates but are made for digesting dietary fats, like those in sun flower and thistle seeds. Bread makes birds feel full but does not provide enough nutrition. Besides, it gets moldy quickly and becomes toxic to birds. So, please convert your old bread to bread-crumbs or compost. It's not for the birds!



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Artist in Residence — Editing the Garden

By Lori Levine

It's the time of year to assess your successes and failures in the garden and put together a plan of action. A friend of mine calls it "editing" the garden – selectively removing things that aren't working, and replanting/rejuvenating where necessary. I have become a ruthless "shovel-pruner" and have found that as I hone my skills of what to remove, the garden flourishes and my labor decreases.

I've lived in DuFief since 1988 and in May celebrate my 28th year here. I became interested in gardening soon after getting settled in and my interest became an obsession. I've learned by trial and error as well as through books, internet, fellow gardening friends, apprenticeship, and travels to England (the Mecca of gardening). I took a year off my job as a systems engineer about ten years ago to pursue garden design full time. I first worked at Johnson's Garden Center with an experienced landscape designer, then quit Johnson's to start my own business. I designed some gardens for neighbors and acquaintances. While the garden design business didn't take off well enough to sustain me financially after my divorce, I learned a lot about gardening in the process.

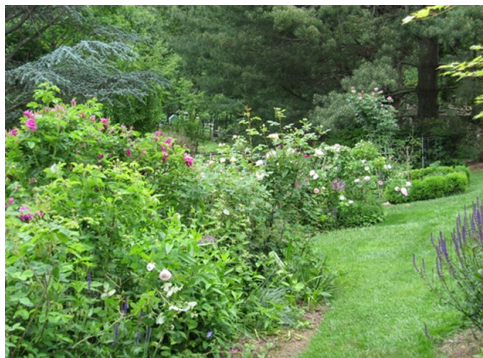
Much of what I did in the early stages of developing my home garden I later redesigned. There are several good reasons for needing to edit your garden periodically. One is as I've gotten older I realized my original plant selection and design was very high maintenance. While I think "low-maintenance" is impossible unless you want astro-turf, I certainly had gone in the opposite direction when I was starting out and became overwhelmed by the upkeep. I had lots of small, intricate beds filled with roses, perennials, bulbs, and annuals. I have since reduced the size of my beds to more organically shaped areas, saving my favorite disease-resistant rose varieties (including some heirlooms and English roses) and removing the rest. I found that



Garden in 2008 at its peak of high-maintenance

simple curved bed shapes work best—in place of more formal symmetrical designs. Weeds are reduced by keeping the beds mulched.

I grow other lower-maintenance shrubs too – such as viburnum, mock orange, rhododendrons. I no longer plant annuals except for some vegetables, since they tend to require work every season (though I have a few self-sowing annuals and biennials that continue on by themselves). I no longer feel that I am a slave to my garden but rather a partner with it.



Post-editing: Easier to maintain but still lots of blooms to enjoy as plants fill in again.

I'm very selective about perennials now, avoiding or removing the thugs that will take over or become invasive – periwinkle (vinca minor), English ivy, mint, wild garlic, daylily, Japanese honeysuckle, etc. I'm still pulling up periwinkle I planted 20+ years ago that I've been trying to eradicate for ten years. Another reason for editing the garden is that over time plants will often outgrow their allotted space. I have made the mistake many beginners make: plant things too close together or plant trees too close to the house. One should consider the size of the plant in ten to fifteen years, and fill in empty spaces with non-invasive flowers that can be easily pulled out later. A garden takes patience to develop. I now favor smaller trees such as redbud, hornbeam, Japanese maple, and dogwood, and shy away from the maples and pines that tend to overgrow their spaces (some with shallow root systems that will starve out grass and other plants around them). Native trees and shrubs will also feed the wildlife, and there are no worries about them becoming invasive. Fruit trees, while beautiful, tend to have insect and disease problems in the mid-Atlantic region with few exceptions (figs and persimmons come to mind as being healthy no-spray alternatives). Pruning shrubs is also a necessity. Houses in DuFief generally look better with informal landscaping, which means

shrubs pruned to nice rounded shapes instead of squared-off shearing. The plants are healthier with this approach too, because light can reach the plant from top to bottom. Overgrown shrubbery around the house looks unkempt, messy, and can damage wood siding (provide moisture for mold growth). Make sure that plants don't obscure your view of the street from the driveway, for safety reasons too. Azaleas and rhododendrons must be pruned soon after flowering (when the flowers shrivel), in late May or early June, or you will be cutting off the buds that form in late summer for the next year's flowering.

I've also had to make changes due to changing light patterns, with trees maturing in my yard or in neighbors' yards casting more shade. Some plants that thrived years ago would flower less or get leggy. I've had to find solutions for areas that have a lot of shade. I like to grow native ferns and wildflowers in shady spots, such as Solomon's Seal, Virginia bluebells, White Wood Asters, May Apple, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Foamflower, to name a few. Then of course there are the exotic non-invasive shade lovers such as astilbe and hosta (if you have protection from deer; otherwise hostas are like a salad bar). Some shrubs that do well in shade include Japanese Andromeda (pieris japonica), boxwood, cherry laurel, schip laurel, rhododendron, and mountain laurel (kalmia latifolia).



The author in her garden

The way to discover what needs to be "edited", first and foremost is to observe. Walk your property and observe it often, at different times of year. Look at neighbors' gardens, magazines and the internet for ideas. Don't be afraid to remove plants or make changes. A well-kept lawn will also set off your garden and keep up the appearance and value of your home.

But also listen to your garden and the garden can be your teacher as you evolve together.

New DuFief HOA Board Member — Introduction

By **Nathalie Noon**, *DuFief HOA Secretary*

As the newly elected Secretary of the DuFief HOA, I would like to introduce myself. I am originally from Arlington, Virginia, and have lived in the D.C. area almost my entire life. I currently work as an attorney in Northern Virginia.

My husband, James, our son, Max, and I have lived in DuFief since 2015. We moved here specifically for the great schools, the wonderful scenic neighborhood, and the natural surroundings that DuFief offers. Our son started Kindergarten at DuFief this past year, and we love being able to walk to school with him. Our house overlooks the pond, and you will often see us on adventure walks or exploring the creek beds.

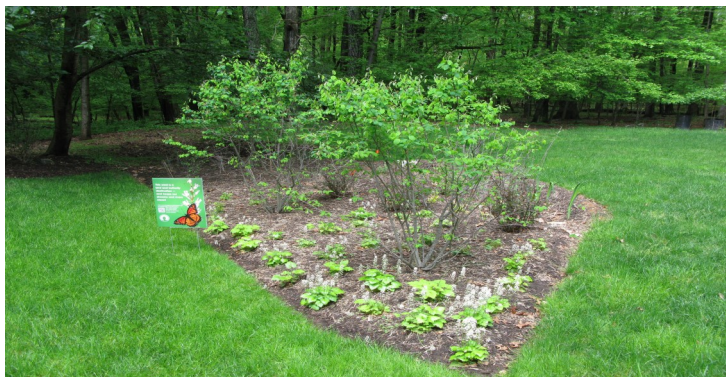
I'm excited to serve on the board and hope to meet many of you as we enjoy our beautiful community. If you have any questions for me or any member of the board, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Rain Gardens — Protecting and Promoting Native Beauty

By **Jamie Pflasterer**

With the many, many days of rain this past spring, DuFief homeowners may have “rain on the brain” more than usually! Besides making everything wet and muddy, excessive rain sweeps lawn chemicals and fertilizer, oil and grease from the street, and pet waste into the Muddy Branch stream and eventually into the Chesapeake. When there is a sudden storm event or if you have a steeper slope on your property, swiftly moving runoff can cause erosion both in your yard and as the water enters the stream. Not only is erosion unsightly, it also affects wildlife habitats and the health of the stream.

When planning your landscaping, rain gardens are a fantastic option for beautifying your yard, while also helping to manage storm-water runoff. A rain garden is a collection of plantings around a small depression that collects excess water. The garden holds the water and allows it to slowly filter into the ground. This prevents pollutants from reaching our waterways, prevents erosion by slowing the flow of the water over the ground, and also helps recharge groundwater. Using native plants in your rain garden can also attract beautiful birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.



When installing a rain garden, there are a couple of important considerations: the permeability of your soil, ensuring that water flow is directed away from your home and your neighbors' homes, and verifying that the garden does not support any permanent pools of water (to discourage mosquitoes). How to know whether a rain garden is something you want to tackle yourself or whether you need to consult a professional? Luckily there are many great resources online:

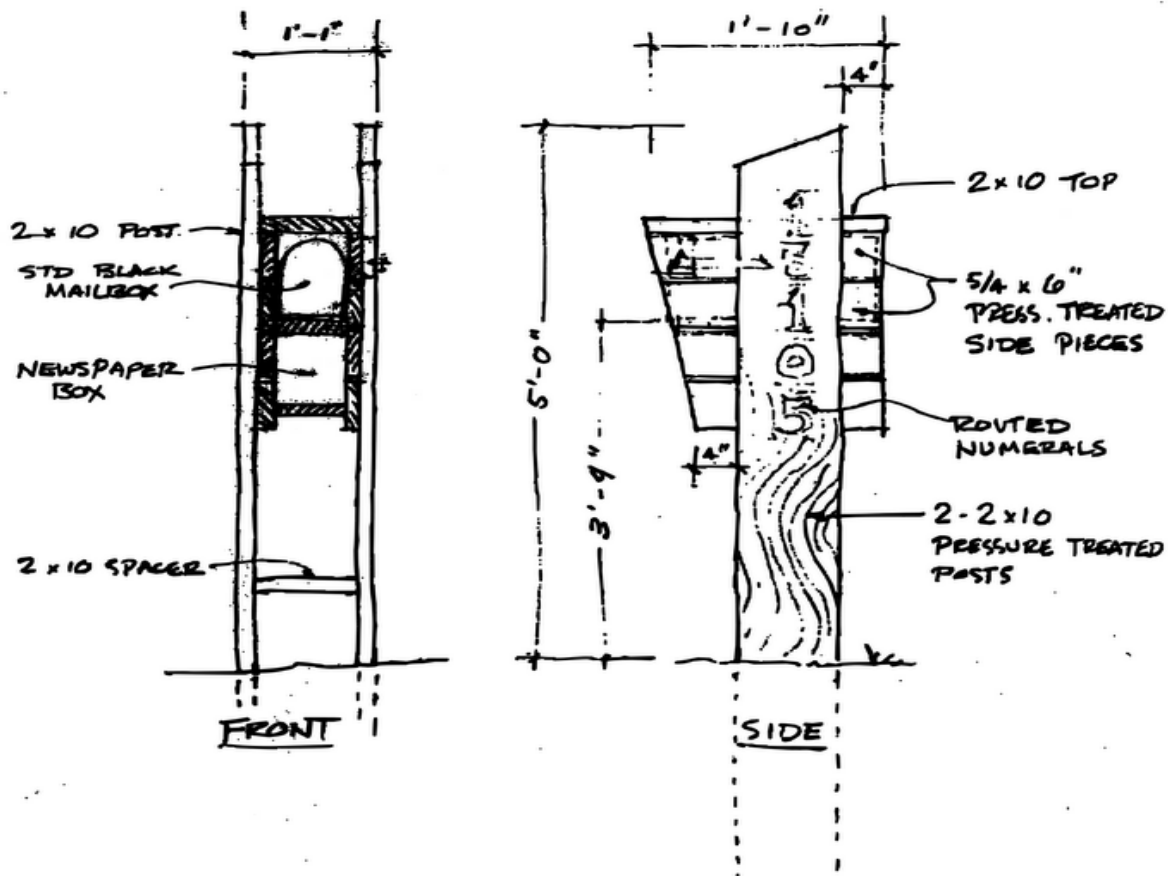
- <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/downloads/rainscapes/factsheets/rain-gardens.pdf>
- The Rain Garden app (for iOS only), developed by the University of Connecticut with collaboration from professionals in Maryland and elsewhere
- <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/water/rainscapes-rebates.html> to determine if your project is eligible for rebates from the county.
- Rain gardens are a great way to protect the health of the Bay as well as local streams and wildlife, and they can also help transform muddy “problem” areas of your yard into lush and attractive landscaping. Instead of “rain, rain go away” – you’ll be asking for rain to come back again for another day!

ARC Affairs — Design for Wooden Mailbox

MAILBOXES ETC.

A couple of notes on mailboxes. The Association's covenants require that all mailboxes be enclosed in wood. If anyone needs a new wooden enclosure, the association has 10 of standard design made by the Gaithersburg High School woodworking shop. We are selling these at cost, \$30 (includes post.) Call Bob Kelly at 424 7491.

Below is Kent Morgan's mailbox design, one that has become popular throughout our and neighboring subdivisions.



This is the original design of DuFief's wooden mail box, done by Kent Morgan, an architect who still lives on DuFief Drive. It probably dates from about 40 years ago. We can still have the same mailbox enclosure, but these days not for "\$30 (including post)". However, the design gives all the measurements so that you can build your own or have it built by someone else.

This is the ARC-recommended design, but there are other attractive wooden mail box enclosures in the neighborhood that you might prefer. Just as long as the mailbox itself is enclosed in wood.

2016 DuFief Community Picnic



SAVE THE DATE: **Sunday, September 25, 2016**
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

RAIN DATE: **Sunday, October 2, 2016**
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 Nathalie Noon at nathalienoon@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

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

As of June 7, 2016 the Board has collected annual dues from 267 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 87.3%). 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 2016 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2016.

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, 2012, 2013, and 2014 and seven homes that still owe for 2015.

The Board does not enjoy having to take neighbors to court; however, the homeowner assessments are no different from 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 2016 dues in the amount of \$195.70, please do so as soon as possible in order to avoid additional costs and a potential lawsuit.

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

Brian Frank

**We have collected
87.3% of dues for 2016**



One of the many drawings Joe Jacobs did of places in and around Gaithersburg.

In Memoriam

Joseph Jacobs passed away on May 9, 2016 at the age of 91, after a long career in graphic design and fine-arts painting. He worked from his studio at his house on Brandy Hall Lane where he was an original owner with his wife Madeleine. (See also the Artist in Residence Column of the Spring 2011 Readwood issue.)

DuFief Homes Association

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Announcements

Welcome New Board and Committee Members!

One new member—**Nathalie Noon**—see introduction above—was elected to the DuFief Board at the Annual HOA Meeting in February. She agreed to serve as Secretary. **Elmer Klebs** and **Lisa Li** agreed to join the ARC Committee as much-needed reinforcement.

We would like to thank **Jeanette Repie** for many years of devoted service to the community in her capacity as Secretary of the Board. (See President's Message.)

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

