

# Tree Tops - President's Message

by Nathalie Noon, HOA Board President

Dear Community:

The community is in full bloom and it is nice to be heading toward summer and warmer weather. The Board has recently nominated additional members to serve on the ARC Committee. The ARC Committee is comprised of volunteers who are charged with the important role of maintaining the architectural harmony of the community. We have many homeowners who would like to upgrade their homes, repaint and/or replace their siding. All of these are examples of projects that must be approved by the ARC. Before starting any exterior project, please take the time to review the ARC Guidelines which can be found in the homeowners' directory that is handed out each year. The guidelines can also be found on the community website at [www.dufief.org](http://www.dufief.org). All projects that involve work on the exterior of your home must be approved by the ARC. An application must be filled out; the form can be found at <http://www.dufief.org/architectural-review/>. The form can be submitted electronically or by mail for consideration. Please provide details about your proposed project including specifics about colors and materials and give dates on when the project will be initiated and completed. Our guidelines also require that all homeowners discuss project proposals with their immediate neighbors. The ARC has 30 days to approve or deny an application, though many applications are processed more quickly. Please feel free to reach out to the ARC directly with any questions, concerns or for general guidance. Ask questions before starting the work. The ARC can be reached directly by email at [arc@dufief.org](mailto:arc@dufief.org). Please help maintain the character and charm of our community by complying with the ARC guidelines.

The last day of school is fast approaching. After June 14th more kids will be playing outside, riding their bikes to the pool, and there will be increased pedestrian activity in the community with the warmer weather. It is important that everyone keeps their vehicle speeds within the posted limits, watches out for pedestrians and cyclists in the crosswalks and comes to a complete stop at all stop signs. Taking a few extra minutes to be more cautious can help keep everyone safe.

Finally, I would like to thank Pam Weld for her service to the community for the past several years. Pam was an active Board member who has been instrumental in organizing the picnic each year, keeping the Pond looking nice and is continuing in her efforts to revamp the front entrance. Thank you for your service to the community, Pam!

I hope everyone has a happy and healthy summer.

Nathalie Noon



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### Special points of interest:

- *From Delhi to DuFief*
- *On the Philosophy of DuFief Architecture*
- *Treasurer's Report*

# From Delhi to DuFief

by Leah Wagner

In 2012, our family took a two-year job in Panama City, Panama, and from there took a three-year job in New Delhi, India. We loved it so much that three years turned into four, and our lives will never be the same.

When we arrived in Delhi, our sons were six and eight, still *chota* boys with baby teeth. They joined a school in Chanakyapuri made up of people from 55 different countries and sports leagues that regularly went to Dubai, Oman, and Vietnam for competitions. Their school was English medium and based on the USA school calendar but spent a lot of time on Indian culture and customs. My sons both know a bit of Hindi and have *kurtas* to wear on special occasions. We know how to help out at the Sikh temple, rolling *chapatis* before enjoying *langar*. We have helped chop vegetables for the elephants at the rescue center and helped bathe and exercise them. They have been to Dehradun and Ranthambhore and Goa and Agra and Mathura and Mussoorie and Shimla. And on school breaks, we hit the surrounding countries: Hong Kong, Dubai, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao, Sri Lanka, Japan, Jordan, Egypt, Singapore, and Malaysia. Their lives are so different than mine was, growing up very near here in Rockville.

We were involved in programs to feed street dogs and adopted two; our surviving dog Chai now lives with us and regularly sneaks out of our house on Happy Choice Lane. She's a scrappy survivor who surprisingly loves the snow. We have taken local trains and overnight trains and learned about "Indian Stretchable Time." We have learned that no Indian is called by the name their parents gave them, and in this way, I got my own Indian name: *Agni*. We know that whom you call your sister is really your cousin, and whom you call your cousin is your friend, which means that your friends are strangers, which works out perfectly. We know how to drive on the left side of the road and when to honk (always!). We know how to bargain and how to eat with our right hand, that we love *dosas* and *uttapams* and especially *poori sabji*. And that next to the Beatles the best pop can be found in Bollywood. We love great Indian pop songs like *Iski Uski* and London *Thumakda*. When I made a video about our time in India I set it to the beautiful *Uff Teri Ada*. (You can find the video at <http://tiny.cc/k00e3y>)

But the thing we will most take away from India are the relationships we formed. The hospitality of the people we met was overwhelming and unforgettable. We have become like family with the beautiful Asha who came to work for us; when her second son Nishant was born, Asha named me the official *maassi-ji*, and my younger son, in particular, became the proudest *bhiya*. We spent *Diwali* at her home every year, and my sons learned to play cricket in the alleys with her older son and his friends.

While there, I also got the opportunity to teach local camp (slum) children in an English program my kids' school runs. I taught the most basic level out of seven, and the school kids were from 6 to 12 years old. The first time I brought food treats in, a few kids ate them but most wrapped them up and put them in their bags or pockets. When I managed to figure out what was happening, with my very limited Hindi and their



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very limited English, I was blown away to find out they were taking them home to share with their siblings and parents. I learned quickly to leave a lot of extra time when I needed to visit their camp to meet with parents. It was never enough to visit one child's tiny, immaculate one-room home, I had to visit them all, shepherded through the camp by a merry band of grinning children who loved to point out their friends and uncles and favorite puppies and every single detail. Their pride made me proud just to know them. Each family would bring me inside and share some tea or water or *namkeen* with me. When one of the children, Rahul, was killed while playing in the road, all of the children came together for a very touching ceremony for him.

Because I was involved in a few sports leagues, the majority of the friendships I developed in India were with the men I played with and against. I have been to their weddings, their children's baptisms, and when I got my own Royal Enfield motorcycle, I went on long Sunday morning drives that ended with *chole bhature* and *chai* at a roadside *dhaba*. Unforgettable and delicious to boot.



India has changed us. We use *jugaad* to repair items we would usually have simply thrown out and replaced. We worry less about the small problems in light of how many blessings and how much safety and security we have here in the USA. We give more, and hopefully, we are kinder, more relaxed, more thoughtful people. We are definitely fatter, and for that, I blame the *chole*. But I wouldn't change anything, and inside of us, there's a part that will always call India home.

Thank you all for welcoming us to DuFief! I hope you will find us to be good neighbors.

### **Leah, Stuart, Nate, and Jack**

Chota = small

Kurta = long shirt without a collar

Chapatis = flat round unleavened bread

Langar = the free public communal meal

Agni = fire

Dosa = rice pancake stuffed with potatoes

Uttapam = thick pancake with vegetables

Poori = bread puff, break off pieces to scoop up sabji

Sabji = spiced vegetable dish

Iski Uski = it doesn't matter

Thumakata = happy gait

Maassi = aunt (mother's sister)

Uff Teri Ada = oh my! Your charm!

Ji = term of respect, like sir but gender neutral

Bhiya = brother

Diwali = Hindu festival of lights

Namkeen = savory snacks

Chole = chickpeas

Bhature = fried bread puff used to pick up *chole*

Chai = masala chai spiced tea with milk and sugar

Dhaba = small roadside restaurant

Jugaad = "band-aid" fixes to keep items working

## ARC Affairs: *On the Philosophy of the DuFief Architecture*

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At the recent Annual HOA Meeting, one of the members of the Architectural Review Committee suggested that we reprint this article, which appeared in the summer issue of the Readwood in 2013. At that time, one of the newcomers to DuFief asked the question: *"Why are the houses in DuFief supposed to be brown?"* The question should not have to be asked. It should be obvious that the houses in DuFief are brown because of the environment they are in. The various shades of earth-tone-brown wood siding are meant to match the tree trunks in the woods around our houses. That at least was the intention of the builder, Miller & Smith, who built the neighborhood in the early 70's — long before "forest-bathing" became the new trend.

This is what Miller and Smith said about their approach to creating a community:

*"The first step in the process is to understand the land. We begin by researching, walking, and getting to know the land and the surrounding neighborhood. The community's story and vision gradually emerge and become clear. Who will want to live in this community? What is the right mix of housing? What amenities will make it special? What natural features should be preserved? The land will reveal what is needed to create a vibrant and livable community."*

The style in which the DuFief houses are built is strongly influenced by "mid-century modern" architecture. The dominant features of that architecture are:

- **Integration with nature.** Rooms have multiple outdoor views, or multiple access points, encouraging an appreciation of healthy living.
- **Flat planes.** The geometric lines of the house are regular and rigorous. Flat roofs are common, though modern ranch-style houses (as we have here in DuFief) have gable roofs.
- **Large windows.** Sliding-glass doors and other expansive panes of glass allow light to enter rooms from multiple angles.
- **Changes in elevation.** Small steps going up and down between rooms create split-level spaces. A mid-century modern might have partial walls, or cabinets of varying heights to create different depths in the space..

As Sian Winship, at the time President of the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, said:

*"The birth of mid-century modern was after the war. The houses have open floor plans and giant sliding-glass doors, which encourage people to go outside and be healthy. In a traditional home, the window height is 4 to 5 feet, and you can't see out as a child. With these walls of glass, children become engaged and open-minded because the environment stimulates the senses in a different way."*

She notes that architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who trained mid-century modern architects like Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, was also a huge influence.

*"It's nice to see mid-century modernism being appreciated now,"* she adds, *"as we're entering a period where houses from the 1960s are becoming eligible to be on the National Register of Historic Places."*

The DuFief Community's architectural guidelines for renovations, repairs, and additions are in accordance with this philosophy.

Please go to [www.dufief.org/architectural-review](http://www.dufief.org/architectural-review)  
before doing work on the exterior of your home.

## Gardening in DuFief

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by Moira Davenport



Virginia Bluebells

Are you interested in gardening with native plants and creating an environment friendly to birds and pollinators? If so, I'd love to meet to exchange ideas, plants, experiences, challenges, etc. I have been adding native shrubs and perennials to my yard on 11700 Flints Grove Lane over the past three years and find it a fascinating and rewarding way to garden.

If you'd like to meet for informal discussions, please contact me at [moiradavenport@gmail.com](mailto:moiradavenport@gmail.com)

## Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

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by Brian Frank, Treasurer

**Dues Notices for 2019 were sent out by email or first-class mail in early January.**

**Payment of \$213.85 was due on February 1, 2019.**

As of May 24, 2019, the Board has collected annual dues from 227 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 74%). 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.

We have been very successful in collecting dues. All assessments have been collected for 2010 and all years prior. There is one homeowner who has not paid dues for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016; two homeowners who have not paid dues for 2017, and ten homeowners who have not paid dues for 2018.

**We have collected  
74 % of 2019 dues.**

The Board does not enjoy having to take neighbors to court. However, the homeowner assessments are not any different from having to pay real estate taxes on your property. If you owe more than one year of dues, a lawsuit is likely to be filed.

To those of you who have paid the annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". Those of you who have not yet paid the 2019 dues in the amount of \$213.85, 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 or email me at [treasurer@dufief.org](mailto:treasurer@dufief.org).

**Brian Frank**

# A Thank-You to Pam Weld

by the Members of the DuFief Board

Pam Weld is taking a break from being a member of the DuFief Board. During the six years of working for the DuFief community as a board member she was involved in many areas of our community's life. She has been making sure that the front entrance and the rest of the common areas look as good as they can at the most favorable price; she is usually also helping with setting up for the annual picnic, making sure there are plates, utensils, table cloths, and Costco food supplies. It was she who put in place the signs for every monthly HOA meeting; she also helped distribute the printed Readwood copies.

For her, these were all secondary tasks; her real passion was and still is the pond. Pam was the one who diligently participated in the effort to restore the access to the pond from Coles Chance Road: the installation of the new sign at the entrance and the repair of the flight of stairs, with the addition of handrails. She dealt with potential contractors for adding concrete pavers to allow vehicles of any kind to access the pond area. On her walks around the pond with her dog she always pays attention to and reports fallen trees, excessive growth of plants in the pond, debris on the path, and makes sure they are removed. She says she will still be involved, and we hope that she really is only taking a break and that she will join the Board again in the future. And maybe she will now have more time for developing her idea to make DuFief into a community where elderly residents can stay in their homes with the help of minimally organized neighborhood support systems.

In the meantime, a heart-felt "thank you" to Pam.

## New Board and Committee Members: *Introductions*

At the Annual DuFief Homeowners Meeting in February one new Board member, Fred Mingo, was elected and Nathalie Noon and Brian Frank were re-elected. Sandi Shapiro and Helen Don have volunteered to take over the Welcome Committee. Marcia Arieira, Helen Don, and Lori Levine are going to join Pooja Rathore and Jean-Louis Staudenmann on the ARC Committee. We welcome their willingness to help maintain DuFief as a great place to live.

### **Fred Mingo, DuFief HOA Board**

*My name is Fred Mingo and I am honored to have the opportunity to represent and serve our community as a board member on the DuFief Home Owners Association Board. I bring with me almost 40 years of leadership experience; first as a Navy pilot and officer – I retired as a Captain – then as an industry executive and presently from my leadership role in the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am particularly interested in improving our communications, coordination and oversight, and adding transparency to our board decision-making processes.*

*I moved into DuFief five years ago to live with my now wife Sandi Shapiro, on Brandy Hall Lane. Together we have five adult children, my three boys and her two girls, who like to keep us busy and engaged as active parents. Sandi and I maintain an active schedule with our children and share common interests in traveling, adventuring, finding new restaurants, bicycling, exercising, hiking (with and without our dogs), reading and working on a multitude of home improvement projects.*

### **Lori Levine, Architectural Review Committee**

*I am a retired systems engineer who has lived in DuFief for over 30 years. Currently I enjoy doing yoga and gardening, and taking walks in and around our beautiful neighborhood and parks. I am a volunteer Weed Warrior trying to slow down the non-native plant species invaders in our local Muddy Branch parklands. I also do part-time garden design and home organization consultation. I joined the Architectural Review Committee to help with reviewing applications and with standardizing the color palette for the exteriors of DuFief homes.*

## **Marcia Leite Arieira, Architectural Review Committee**

*My husband and I, and three of our four kids, moved to DuFief in 1993, after arriving in the DC area the year before from Brazil to pursue Ph.D. studies and Fulbright post-doc work respectively. After living in Rockville for a while we discovered DuFief. I remember being taken by the entrance to the neighborhood from Rte. 28—which at the time was still a two-lane country road—so majestic, with those trees arching under the sunset of late summer. We loved the DuFief architecture because it reminded us of the modern urban architecture of Brazil – large, wide windows, and no frills, no ornate columns, no Gone-with-the-Wind-type houses. We never wanted to leave. In late 1996, we bought the house at 11552 Brandy Hall Lane, right next-door to the one we rented. Here our kids grew up, got married, made their friends. Three of them went to DuFief Elementary and Frost Middle School, two of them are Wootton High School graduates, and my older son graduated from the IB Program at Richard Montgomery High School.*

*We made many friends in DuFief. Attendance at Annual HOA meetings and late-summer HOA picnics were a must. Around the late 1990s we got more involved. We both served on the HOA Board as members and Vice-Presidents, and on-and-off, I have been a member of the ARC. This has been my passion because of my interest in architecture and its relevance as the social and cultural glue that binds neighborhoods and people together. As time passes, the architectural meaning of DuFief tends to get lost if we do not nurture it. I am now happily back at the ARC, hoping to do just that.*

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## **Helen Don, Architectural Review Committee and Welcoming Committee**

*Hello! I'm Helen Don, and I've been happy to call DuFief my home for almost nine years. We purchased our house in this neighborhood for three main reasons: being in the Wootton school district; walking proximity to DuFief Elementary; and the beautiful woods and trails accessible from our backyard. These three factors have all lived up to the dreams I had for raising my three kids here, who are now 10, 8 and 1.5 yrs old.*

*I also run a portrait studio and photography education business out of my home. My clients and students always comment how beautiful our neighborhood is and are fascinated by the deer. I joined the ARC recently because I value the beauty in our neighborhood, and can offer an artistic eye as well as perspective from a young family who plans on growing old in this hidden gem in the woods.*

*If you're at all interested in taking better pictures, sign up to receive my free monthly photography tips here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5uvduk8>*

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## **Sandra Shapiro, Welcoming Committee**

*Welcome to DuFief! That is a phrase you will be hearing from me when you move into our community. My name is Sandi Shapiro and I am pleased to rejoin the HOA after many years to be a member of the Welcoming Committee this year. If you recently moved in, don't be surprised if I knock on your door with a small gift and a smile. My goal is to be sure that each new neighbor feels welcomed and has information to make the most of our community and surrounding areas.*

*I was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, then moved to Maryland after graduating from Miami University. I have lived in DuFief on Brandy Hall Lane for 24 years, and have raised my two daughters at DuFief ES, Frost MS and Wootton HS. I now enjoy our home with my husband, Fred Mingo, a recent Board member, and our two Chihuahua mixes. After having taught in Montgomery County for over 32 years as an elementary school teacher, I tutor and coach children through young adults in all areas. My business, Love to Learn Coaching and Tutoring, specializes in helping those who have challenges with ADHD, Anxiety and Executive Function Disorder. In addition, I enjoy gardening, exercising, walking, and spending time with our five adult children.*

*Whether an old or new neighbor, please feel free to contact me at [shapiro2@gmail.com](mailto:shapiro2@gmail.com) if I can help you navigate our neighborhood and school resources. I am looking forward to sharing my enthusiasm and love of DuFief with you.*

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**DuFief  
Homes  
Association**

**DuFief Homes Association Board**  
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**Mailing Address:  
PO Box 3034  
Gaithersburg, MD 20885**

**[www.dufief.org]**



**DuFief HOA Board Members:**

- President:* Nathalie Noon — nathalienoon@gmail.com  
*Vice President:* Keith Shenk—shenk24@gmail.com  
*Treasurer:* Brian Frank — treasurer@dufief.org  
*Secretary:* Betty Ball — ball.betty@gmail.com  
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**ARC Committee:**

- Jean-Louis Staudenmann (Chair)*  
Marcia Arieira—marciaariera@gmail.com  
Helen Don—helen@helendon.com  
Lori Levine—levinel@verizon.net  
Pooja Rathore —pkprathore@gmail.com

**Welcoming Committee :**

- Sandra Shapiro—shapiro2@gmail.com  
Helen Don—helen@helendon.com

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

**Announcement**

Go to pages 6 and 7 to read about changes to Board and Committee memberships.

Young bluebird couple and American Finch,  
*photographed by Jean-Louis Staudenmann in his backyard.*



**Note:** For the homeowners who do not have email, the *Readwood* was printed at cost as a community service by **Alpha Graphics Shady Grove** in Gaithersburg (agshadygrove.com).



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. Eight members must be residents of common ownership communities and the other seven 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, reserve, enroll;" 3. "eSubscription;" 4. "Create an Account;" 5. "Consumer Protection;" 6. "CCOC."