

# Tree Tops - President's Message

by **Nathalie Noon**, HOA Board President

Dear Community:

The Covid-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders have certainly been challenging, but I hope this message finds you healthy and well.

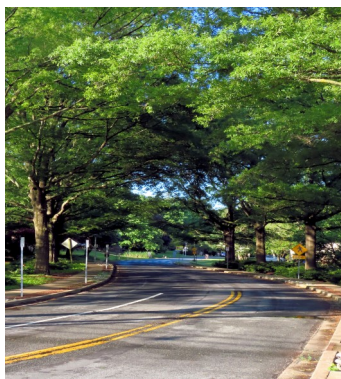
While most of us are spending more time at home and isolating, it has been nice to see residents enjoying the community and the nice spring weather. The community pond is a great place to walk and gives access to the Muddy Branch Park and Trails. If you have not checked it out, now is a great time to connect with the natural surroundings that our community has to offer. The entrance to the Community Pond is on Coles Chance Road.

Monthly Board meetings have been held over Zoom video conference since April and we will continue to hold meetings remotely while restrictions for group gatherings are in place. Each month we send out a community email with the Zoom log-in information and post the information on the website. The login information is also on the Community signs that are posted a few days before the meeting. Please feel free to join us. The meetings are always held on the second Monday of the month. It is a great way to connect with the Board, hear about issues to be dealt with in the community and to ask questions or raise concerns.

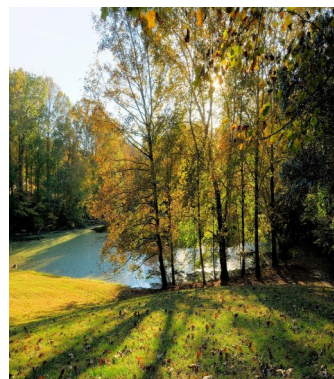
I would like to thank Jean-Louis Staudenmann for his many years of service as the ARC Committee chair and as a member of the Board. We have certainly appreciated his efforts and his longstanding knowledge and commitment to DuFief. William Washington is the new ARC chair and is also a member of the Board. William is joined on the ARC by Betty Ball, Lori Levine, and Leilani Micalizzi. **If you have any questions about changes that you would like to make to your home, please reach out to the ARC Committee; they will be happy to work with you and answer any questions. The ARC can be reached directly by email at [arc@dufief.org](mailto:arc@dufief.org).**

Stay safe and please don't hesitate to reach out if you can use any assistance from the Board or the Community during this challenging time.

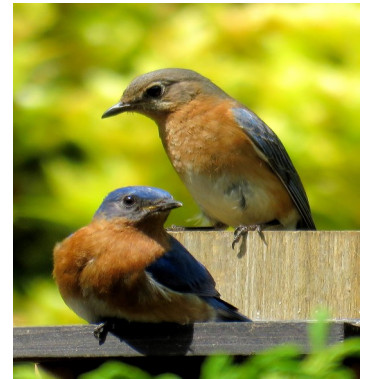
**Nathalie Noon**



Majestic Front Entrance ...



Silence ... .



Birds ...

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### Special points of interest:

- Why we Came to DuFief .....
- Treasurer's Report
- New Board Members— Introductions

## The Silence and the Birds:

### Why we Came to DuFief and Why we are Still Here.

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by Marcia Leite Ariera

The week of March 9 marked a special moment for me and my husband, Carlos. That was the week we went into what was voluntary but soon became mandatory “social isolation” due to the Novel Corona Virus pandemic. From mid-2018 to late 2019, an incredibly unexplained coincidence made us both need complicated surgeries and a specific regimen of immune suppressant drugs. Our physicians were happy with our early and uneventful recovery and so were we. Suddenly, in a matter of days we went from celebrating every new milestone to realizing our recovery was now even more dependent on doing the right thing. At that point, nobody knew precisely what that was, except that the safest thing was to stay at home.

As I write this a little over two months later, we have adjusted to our confinement routine and enjoy our daily walk with our dog in this terrific neighborhood where we have lived for the past 27 years. These walks are an opportunity to travel down memory lane while getting reacquainted with the neighborhood. One of my most vivid recollections is the first time I visited DuFief. I do not know why and how DuFief residents decided that DuFief was where they wanted to live, but I would like to share my experience with you.

It was August 1993. The year before, my husband of six years and I had arrived in the US from Brazil with three of our four kids ranging in age from 3 to 14 – the typical “mine, yours, ours” blended family. We were both on leaves-of-absence from our jobs to pursue graduate and post-doc work and had lived in the US in previous lives. One of my children was born here. My oldest was ten months old when I first came here and seven years old when I left. We were happily settled in College Gardens, Rockville, and adjusted to our new routine when the realtor called to inform us that the owners were returning from their post abroad earlier than expected and needed the house back by the end of the lease.

We were disappointed but started looking for alternatives close by to avoid uprooting the children. Nothing looked enticing until one afternoon I saw in our weekly Rockville Gazette an ad for a house for rent in DuFief. I had no idea where DuFief was and decided to find out more before raising the family’s expectations.

That afternoon I drove here to explore the area. Coming North on Rt. 28, at the time a two-lane road, I made a left at the wooden sign saying **DuFief** and was totally taken by the entrance: majestic, with the park on both sides of the road and those arching trees under the sunset of late summer. The silence and the quiet and all that green... It was love at first sight! That evening we called the owners and less than a month later we moved to the house at 11556 Brandy Hall Lane, right at the corner of Alcinda Lane. In late 1996 we bought and moved into the house next-door – 11552.

We loved everything here: the vegetation, the light, the streets, the school, and our house. We also loved the architectural style. It reminded us of modern architecture in Brazil – large, wide windows and no frills, no ornate columns or Gone-with-the-Wind grandiosity, no Cape Cods or Colonials. Rather, a simple, angular architecture that hinted at mid-century contemporary. In Brazil construction is brick and mortar and here it was wood siding, earth tones, flat inclined roofs, floor-to-ceiling windows, cathedral ceilings.

Brazilian architecture was strongly influenced by the Bauhaus movement in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany and by modernism. Buildings provided protection from hot summers with natural elements, open spaces, large windows, cross-ventilation. We saw this philosophy in DuFief. In addition, it proved to be a friendly neighborhood. Here our kids grew up and made friends and here we also found friends in neighbors with whom we socialized often and still do. At some point from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, my husband and I served on the HOA Board, in several capacities. My favorite was always the ARC because of my interest in DuFief’s architecture and its preservation.

*continued on page 3*

On our recent walks in the neighborhood I still see the exuberant vegetation: the tall trees, the maples and dogwoods, the daffodils, tulips, irises, azaleas, and magnolias that caught our attention our first year here. Everything is so peaceful and quiet that you can almost do some meditation while walking. I often remember walks with my sister when she came to visit. Once she said something I'll never forget: "This is so beautiful and quiet! You can hear the silence here!" You can hear the silence here...So true!

My sister's words actually echoed the description of DuFief in the brochure designed to sell the new neighborhood to prospective buyers back in the early 70s: "Just far enough from the city and traffic to let you hear the birds sing." In this brochure,\* the developers Miller and Smith presented DuFief as a new and desirable neighborhood, stressing key characteristics of the houses here: "A handsome masonry and cedar contemporary design built to blend with good old days nature."

However, this philosophy seems to be slowly forgotten. As old residents move out and new ones move in, practicalities take over—a pretty, quiet, and safe neighborhood in an excellent school district with affordable housing—that's all they know and need. The whole philosophy of DuFief seems to be slipping away. The new residents are not to blame; this is not their fault. New residents with a busy life, children and two careers hardly have any time left to dedicate to understanding the neighborhood. We older residents with the Architectural Review Committee should have taken upon ourselves the responsibility to pass this information to new generations a long time ago...

Mid-century contemporary architecture in general, and this neighborhood in particular, was never about colonial houses, or – for that matter – flashy, showy ones. The architectural concept for DuFief intended for the neighborhood to blend with nature as we saw in the brochure: the brown wood from tree trunks, the green from the trees and bushes, the blueish gray from rocks so present in this area. Primary colors, pinks and bright blues or greens, reds, yellows, or purples do not belong here. These houses should not stand out. On the contrary, they should blend in with the vegetation almost as if they were hiding. Once the houses stand out, once the colors don't blend in, once details that belong in a colonial or classical style of architecture start to show in our houses, that's when this neighborhood will start to lose its charm as one of the few historically non-colonial neighborhoods in the DC metro area. That is also when the real estate value of our houses will go down.

We can avoid this by learning about and understanding the philosophy that guided developers in the design of DuFief. Some people may look at property here as a piece of land they can turn into something totally different. But you cannot or you will lose that cultural and historical glue that holds things together. The moment this neighborhood turns into a space where each family decides individually what to do with the entrance to their house, without considering the harmony of the architectural elements, the houses — and the neighborhood — will lose value. People who want to live in colonials have many choices outside of DuFief, the closest being Westleigh, just on the other side, and some of them cost about the same. In DuFief we should keep our eyes open for new technologies, new material and necessary updates while not losing sight of the cultural glue that brought this all together.

**Websites on Brazilian and mid-century American Architecture:**

[http://visit.rio/en/que\\_fazer/flamengos-park/](http://visit.rio/en/que_fazer/flamengos-park/)

<https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/the-most-famous-brazilian-architects-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/stunning-modern-architecture-oscar-niemeyer>

<https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/places-to-visit-in-brazil-architecture>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-century\\_modern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-century_modern)

\*This original brochure can be found in the HOA webpage – [Dufief.org](http://Dufief.org) – in the section on the History of DuFief.

## **Board and Committee Membership – Update**

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At the Annual DuFief Homeowners Meeting in February three new Board members were elected: **Ron Ely**, **Ying-Xin Fan**, and **David Zlotchenko**. We welcome their willingness to serve on the DuFief HOA Board. Please see page 6 for new Board assignments and contact information.

### **Introductions**

#### **Ron Ely**

I have lived in the DuFief community since 2005 with my wife Clara. We came to DuFief planning to stay for the long term, raising our two sons and our dog here. I have a love of the outdoors and the natural setting of this community. In my spare time I enjoy running ultramarathons, gardening, and growing fruit trees. One of my priorities is to help keep our pond, park, and the nearby trails clean. I believe that the HOA should be service-oriented and remain as non-intrusive and unimposing as possible.

#### **Ying-Xin Fan**

My name is Ying-Xin Fan (you may call me either “Ying-Xin” or “Fan”). My family has been living in the DuFief Neighborhood since 2003. Both my wife, Yanhong, and I came to the US from China in 1998. I am a biochemist currently working for the federal government and Yanhong is a database administrator. We have two daughters. Both of them attended DuFief Elementary School.

We have been blessed to have our first but perfect house in this wonderful neighborhood that matches our personalities and life style. I deeply appreciate the services provided by the previous Board. Serving on the Board will provide me an opportunity to learn and be useful.

#### **David Zlotchenko**

I have lived in the DuFief neighborhood, with my wife Elina, our two kids, and a lovely rescue pit-bull mix, for over five years, having moved to the area from North Carolina. I came to America with my family as a refugee from Georgia. I enrolled at the University of Tennessee to complete my college degree. I am a Data and Information Management Consultant by training and trade. In my free time I enjoy travel, hiking, shuttle sports, and spending time in our backyard. My commitment to serving on the DuFief Board is based on the firm belief that transparency of the Board's activities is the best way to keep the service aligned with our neighbors' interest in maintaining the community's healthy and independent life style and the development of property values.

## **Thank-you to Jean-Louis Staudenmann and Pooja Rathore**

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Special thanks to Jean-Louis Staudenmann and Pooja Rathore for being the main actors on the ARC Committee for the past 10 years, at first informally assisting Dominic Santopietro, the previous ARC Chair, and then taking over his duties. As you can imagine, trying to enforce the ARC guidelines is not an easy endeavor. While many homeowners follow the guidelines, as a member of the ARC you have to be patient with homeowners who make changes to the exterior of their homes without submitting an application, with homeowners whose applications have to be rejected because of non-compliance with the guidelines, and with homeowners who do not even look at the guidelines. Jean-Louis and Pooja, with infinite patience, tried their best to encourage homeowners to maintain or improve their properties while preserving the mid-century-modern character of the neighborhood. They were successful in many cases. Their experience will serve as a guide for the new ARC Committee to continue its work towards maintaining what is so special about our neighborhood.



## Recipe—Apple-Walnut Vinaigrette

From the *Phytopia Cookbook* by **Barbara Gollman** and **Kim Pierce**

2 cloves garlic	2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 small shallots	½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup frozen apple juice concentrate	½ teaspoon dry mustard
1-1/2 tablespoons white Worcestershire sauce	1 tablespoon walnut oil
¼ cup rice vinegar	

1. Finely mince garlic and shallots in a food processor or blender.
2. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.

### Note:

Here are two possibilities for the greens:

- 5 cups greens (such as red leaf or butter lettuce, spinach, or arugula) and 1 cup radicchio leaves; or
- 4 cups mesclun greens mixed with 2 cups torn red leaf lettuce



## Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

by **Brian Frank**, Treasurer

As of May 23, 2020, the Board has collected annual dues from 256 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 84%). 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 2020 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2020. Additional copies of the invoices have been emailed and mailed to homeowners.

**If you are a Gmail Account Holder, please check your SPAM, as we have been advised that there may be a problem with delivery to Gmail accounts.**

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.

Any homes that have not paid their dues are subject to potential lawsuit which will include a request for interest and attorneys fees and may result in a lien on your 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, 2014, 2015 and 2016; two homes that have not paid 2017 dues; four homes that have not paid 2018 dues and 16 homes that have not paid 2019 dues.

The Board does not enjoy having to take neighbors to court. However, the homeowners assessments are no different than 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 your annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". Those of you who have not paid the 2020 dues in the amount of \$220.27, please do so as soon as possible to avoid additional costs, and a potential lawsuit.

If you have questions or would like to discuss your annual assessments, or if you would like to pay your dues electronically, please feel free to contact me at 240-606-5100 or email me at [treasurer@dufief.org](mailto:treasurer@dufief.org).

**Brian Frank**

**We have collected  
84% of 2019 dues.**

# DuFief Homes Association

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

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 3034  
Gaithersburg, MD 20885

[www.dufief.org](http://www.dufief.org)



## DuFief HOA Board Members:

*President:* Nathalie Noon — nathalienoon@gmail.com  
*Vice President:* Ron Ely—elyronw@gmail.com  
*Treasurer:* Brian Frank — treasurer@dufief.org  
*Secretary:* David Zlotchenko— zlotchen@gmail.com  
Ying-Xin Fan—fanyingxin@gmail.com  
Fred Mingo—fmingo12@gmail.com  
Keith Shenk—shenk24@gmail.com  
William Washington —bobmotku@gmail.com  
Linde Fuller— (*Readwood Editor*) fullersk@verizon.net

## ARC Committee:

William Washington., Chair—bobmotku@gmail.com  
Betty Ball —ball.betty@gmail.com  
Lori Levine—levinel@verizon.net  
Leilani Micalizzi—leilanik@gmail.com

*Welcome Committee : membership open*

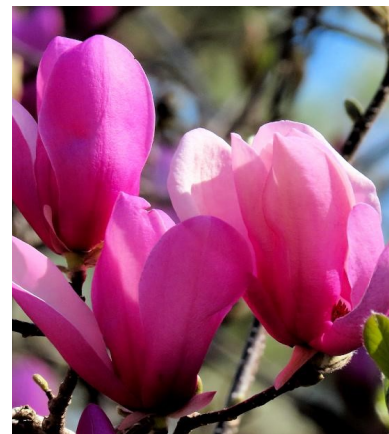
*Webmaster:* Barbara Brenkworth—brenkworth@gmail.com

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## Help Wanted: Welcome Committee

Please consider being available to welcome new neighbors when they move in. You can be as creative as you want to be in sharing information about the community. Perhaps you can also share some baked goods, or a welcoming plant, or a gift card, or some other item. There will be questions that you can answer. You can develop this position to suit you, but most important is the contact with the new resident so they can say, "This is a good place to live. I'm glad I moved here." Please contact the DuFief Board if you're interested in serving in this way.

DuFief HOA Board



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All photos in this issue taken  
by *Jean-Louis Staudenmann*

**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."