

The Dragontopia Garden and Mural at DuFief Elementary School

By Carolyn Carlson and Chris Hakenkamp



Have you wondered, “What in the world is that at DuFief Elementary School? Someone painted on the wall to the right of the front door!” The huge mural was not an accident but the result of several years of planning and hard work.

Several years ago, when the playground in front of the school was reduced to nothing more than wood chips, concerned parents worked together to provide something more welcoming for the front of the school and to celebrate the Learning Center at DuFief. The first phase of the project, the garden, required a grant from Lowe’s School Toolbox for Learning and the design expertise donated by Bruce Allentuck of Allentuck Landscaping. Since the dragon is the DuFief mascot, the students named the new site “Dragontopia Garden”.

The next phase of the project involved Linda

Trusilo, DuFief art teacher, and Lisa Denison, a mural artist. Support came from a Maryland PTA Parent/Family Involvement Grant and a Piedmont Educational Foundation Grant. Linda and Lisa worked with as many students as they could every Spring.

It took four years with additional help from parents and teachers to complete all nine panels. Building service workers had to store the panels during these years until finally, the panels were hung this last fall and dedicated on October 13.

What?! You haven’t seen the mural yet? Walk to the school, sit on the benches in the garden, enjoy the plantings, and imagine what it would be like to live in Dragontopia. Isn’t it amazing what can be done when people come together to turn an idea into reality?

Inside this issue:

Watercolors in DuFief	2
DuFief Treasurer’s Report	3
Door Styles in DuFief	4
Interview with DuFief ES Principal	5

Special points of interest:

- *Artist in Residence*
- *Interview with DuFief ES Principal*

REMINDER

The Annual Potluck and Member Meeting will be held at the DuFief School
 February 20, 2014
 Potluck at 6:30 pm, Meeting at 7:30 pm

Artist in Residence — Water Colors (and Natural Soap) in DuFief

By Linda Sherman

The DuFief community became my home in 1984 when my oldest daughter was not quite a year old. The more contemporary lines of DuFief homes intrigued me, and I loved the beautiful setting in the woods. My three daughters grew up in the neighborhood and in the wonderful schools that our area offers. They are now scattered across the globe – in France, Sweden and Texas. I am moving to Texas myself this year and will be saying goodbye to this community where I have lived for 30 years.

Art has always been a part of my life in some way. I studied photography in college and almost always have a camera with me to capture a face or a flower, a beautiful light or landscape. There are many gardeners in DuFief whose flowers I have photographed or been inspired to paint. All of the gardeners in DuFief should know that they are appreciated!

Watercolor painting is what I love the most. It is a beautiful and sometimes infuriating and unforgiving medium. There are several area art organizations that I have become involved with over the years and where I enjoy participating in juried shows and member meetings and “painting trips” as well as exhibition opportunities. Currently, I have two paintings in a GFAA exhibit at the Annapolis State House.

I am also a signature member of the Baltimore Watercolor Society, Potomac Valley Watercolorists and the Texas Watercolor Society. I particularly love the fluidity and

transparency of watercolors but also enjoy colored pencil painting. Colored pencil is a very slow process, but it is a beautiful medium and I would like to spend more time with it.



I have been accused of painting too many flowers, which I admit I am drawn to, often in a close-up perspective. I am as fascinated with faces as I am with flowers and have done a bit of portrait painting as well. Currently, I would like to focus a bit more on landscape painting. The beautiful Texas Hill Country and the high Sierra in California are both inspirational to me and I would like to capture their beauty with paint on paper.

In another current creative endeavor, I am also making natural soaps. This project and the future company that I will be starting in Texas was inspired by one of my daughters who proclaimed (after taking a women’s studies class) that we cannot use any of the shampoos or body washes we have in the house because they are made with chemicals that are endocrine inhibitors and

carcinogens. Well, that started some research (she was right) that led to an interest in making my own cold-process soap. I was surprised to find out how creative you can be when designing a natural soap using only vegetable oils, natural colors, and essential oils (no ingredients that are chemically derived). It has been an enjoyable process which, after dispensing with the chemicals I was using, has left me with softer, less dry skin.

All of my daughters are also artistically inclined. My middle daughter, Christina, has had quite a bit of success with her oil painting. She is currently living in Sweden but is working on commissions mostly in the States. My oldest daughter is working in the business world but has developed creative outlets using fabric and paper. My youngest daughter, still a full-time student, is a fabulous writer and is pursuing a career in this field.



DuFief has been a wonderful place to live and paint. Nestled in the woods, it is an inspirational environment. I will always remember it fondly.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors—Follow-up

By **Pam Weld**

HOA Board Member

Thank you to everyone who responded to the article in the Spring issue of the Readwood regarding a “neighbors helping neighbors” effort. Many of you offered to volunteer, and a few expressed appreciation for having help available when needed. There were also suggestions for group activities, social gatherings, and other resources, particularly for seniors. At this time it does not appear that there are many in DuFief with unmet needs, which is, of course, a good thing. However we would still like to make help available. We are fortunate to

have many volunteer groups in our area that provide various types of assistance. *Senior Connection*, for example, is one that offers many services, including transportation, grocery shopping, and friendly visitors. For more information, go to their web site at www.seniorconnectionmc.org

Please contact Carolyn Carlson or Pam Weld, and they will connect you with a volunteer or help you find information that could be of assistance.

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Treasurer’s Report

By **Brian Frank**

HOA Treasurer

As of February 7, 2014, the Board has collected annual dues from 230 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 75%). The annual assessments, which 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 2014 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2014.

Our Annual Meeting is on February 20, 2014 and any homeowners who have not paid their dues will not be able to vote. Moreover, any homeowners who have not paid their dues are subject to potential lawsuits, which will include a request for interest and attorney’s fees and may result in a lien on their properties.

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, three homes that have not paid dues for 2012, and twelve homes that have not paid dues for 2013.

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.

**We have collected
75% of dues.**

To those of you who have paid their annual assessments in a timely manner, “THANK YOU”. Those of you who have not paid the 2014 dues in the amount of \$165.00, please do so.

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

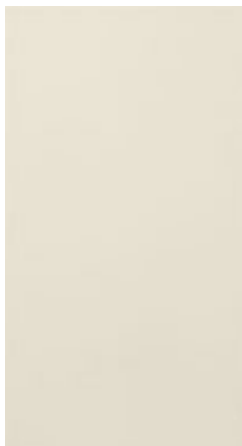
Door Styles in DuFief

By Linde Fuller

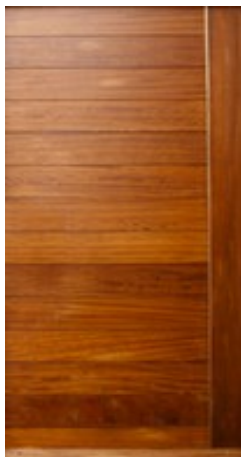
When you walk down our streets in DuFief, you invariably come across this now familiar look of mid-century modern houses where the owners have replaced the front doors and the garage doors in a style that could most kindly be described as Home Depot Eclectic (in the words of Architect Arrol Gellner in *Dos and Don'ts of Mixing Architectural Styles*, July 7, 2006). The garage doors show raised panels and sometimes a row of little colonial sunburst windows, while the front doors boast perhaps sidelights or a flowery semi-circular window. The original mid-century modern style of our homes is hardly recognizable among the hodgepodge of stylistic motifs.

You might say, "Oh it's only a door, colonial or not, what does it matter!" But a single motif can call up a whole architectural style. Motifs act as a kind of visual shorthand. And the most clear-cut dividing line between irreconcilable motifs is the one between traditional and modern architecture. There are exceptions, but in general, traditional and modern styles spring from diametrically opposed philosophies and invariably clash. Also, trying to transform one into the other almost never works. All this may be nitpicking, but it's nitpicking that makes for good design and maintains the integrity of an architectural style.

So, next time you need to replace your front door or garage door, keep in mind that mixing architectural styles is rarely a good idea. There are examples of flush-panel doors that you might find more interesting than those we have now and can be ordered through local suppliers or on-line. Miller & Smith, who built our development, order their contemporary doors through W.T. Perry. Bob Nanz of RDNC Residential Design/Build Contracting, a former long-time homeowner who knows and loves the DuFief architecture, gets his contemporary doors from Therma-Tru or Pro-Via.



YES



MAYBE



NO!

Before making changes to your home, please go to www.dufief.org/architectural-review for the DuFief Community's architectural guidelines for renovations, repairs, and additions.



DuFief School News

By Carolyn Carlson

Interview with Brent Mascott, Principal of DuFief Elementary School

Mr. Mascott grew up in Columbia, Maryland and went to an open elementary school there. There is more information about the school on the DuFief Elementary School website, <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/dufiefes>, as well as monthly letters from Principal Mascott. Carolyn Carlson interviewed Mr. Mascott on December 13.)



CFC: Tell us about the path leading you to DuFief Elementary School.

Mr. Mascott: I am in my 16th year in the Montgomery County Public School system. I have taught at the elementary school level, at the high school level as a math teacher, and worked as assistant principal in two schools. Last year I was involved in a principal internship.

CFC: You've been with us now for about 6 months. Have there been any surprises?

Mr. Mascott: I have never worked in such a small school. There are 338 students with a supportive staff and parents.

CFC: What is your vision for the school?

Mr. Mascott: My vision is to provide a world-class education that would prepare the children for middle school, high school and beyond. It is important for the children to work together and to learn collaborative skills. These children are preparing for jobs that don't even exist yet.

CFC: What are the plans for the DuFief building facility?

Mr. Mascott: Around 2017, DuFief ES will be subject to a feasibility study. Not only staff but also the community will have input into what the needs are. I was previously involved in such studies at two schools. The renovation will consist of a complete rebuild that is projected to be completed 2019-2020.

CFC: What challenges or needs do you see for the coming year?

Mr. Mascott: I see opportunity rather than challenge. Curriculum 2.0, which was introduced in the primary grades, will be in use in the entire school. The staff will support each other in learning the new curriculum.

CFC: How can the entire DuFief community, not just parents, be involved in supporting the school?

Mr. Mascott: Different groups can participate, such as during Career Day, when parents of former students came back for presentations. Volunteers are needed in many areas. You do not have to be a parent to be involved. Students from Wootton have returned in the intern program.

CFC: Explain some of the special programs at DuFief, such as the Learning Center.

Mr. Mascott: We have a Learning Center that teaches children with special needs. There are also many PTA sponsored activities after school, such as a chess club, geography bee and robotics club. There are piano classes, and before school, a writing class.

CFC: Is there anything else you would like the community to know?

Mr. Mascott: The students at DuFief work hard and are enthusiastic. When I go into a classroom, I don't want to leave because what is going on there is exciting. There is a strong community feeling here and people pull together. We're in this together because the parents are their children's first teacher and they educate their children with the support of the school.

DuFief Homes Association

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Announcement

The **Samuel Williams Leadership Foundation** raises funds to award scholarships for programs focused on team building and leadership training. The **“Be T.R.U.E. Leadership Award”** is being kicked off this year with a

5K run/walk at Wootton High School

on March 22, 2014.

On-line registration can be completed at

http://www.woottonboosterclub.org/sw_runwalk.html

Registration is required by Friday, February 28th, to guarantee a t-shirt for race day.

The **Samuel Williams Leadership Foundation** was created in memory of Samuel Williams, a DuFief/Frost/Wootton student who passed away last summer.

