

## Tree Tops - President's Message

by **Vin Kotraiah**, HOA Board President



### Dear Community:

Greetings on behalf of the entire Board! I hope you are having a good summer and are looking forward to a more normal Fall. As a sign that we are returning towards normalcy, the Board will be reaching out to gauge the community's interest in having the annual community picnic this year. Please respond to the survey; your opinions will help us decide.

Monthly Board meetings continue to be held via Zoom video conference; please try to attend so you can have a say in our community matters. These meetings are always held on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. It is a great way to connect with the Board, to hear about the issues that are being addressed and to ask questions or raise concerns. You can also raise your concerns or provide suggestions to improve our community by contacting us directly. Many of you reached out to us regarding the overflowing trash bin near the pond. The Board is working to ensure that this does not occur again in the future. The Board email address is [www.board@dufief.org](mailto:www.board@dufief.org). If you have any architectural questions, please feel free to reach out directly to the Architectural Review Committee at [www.arc.@dufief.org](http://www.arc.@dufief.org). The ARC meets on the first Sunday of every month at 4:00 p.m.

**Vin Kotraiah**, HOA President

**Before doing exterior work to your home, please go to**

**[www.dufief.org](http://www.dufief.org) Architectural Review**

**to apply for prior written approval for additions, alterations, and/or improvements.**

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### Special points of interest:

- *Backyard Birding in DuFief*
- *Calendar of Events*
- *New Board Member Introduction*

# Backyard Birding in DuFief

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by George and Marilyn Candler

We don't get to our favorite "local" birding spots at wildlife reserves as often as we used to, but we have found that our own back yard is a very viable birding spot. Marilyn has logged 67 species that have come into our yard, not including the confusing small warblers that pass through in spring and fall. There are many trees and shrubs on our lot that attract the birds to feed here, but we have added other amenities to attract them as well.

We have a suet feeder that requires birds to land upside down on its bottom to feed as it hangs under a protective plastic bowl that has prevented squirrels and possums from feeding there. It is barely large enough for the piliated woodpecker to feed from it, but it handles the red-bellied and downy woodpeckers quite handily. The blue jays still try to get to it from time to time but just don't seem to be able to hang on. The nuthatch easily feeds there after climbing upside down on the tree beside it.

The nuthatch also feeds from the tubular feeders standing on a pole in the middle of our back yard. He will fly over and grab a seed if one of the feeding holes is open and the birds already feeding there are not threatening like the blue jays. We will see house, Carolina, and white throat sparrows, cardinals, and robins feeding there. When they leave, smaller birds like the house wren, bluebird, chickadee, and chipping sparrow move in. We were treated to the sight of a most brilliant yellow goldfinch and a brightly colored towhee feeding there just this week, so spring is here! Our two hummingbird feeders are due to go up shortly and some bees are hovering in anticipation of the feeder's arrival!

We maintain a birdbath at the edge of our deck year-round with the help of a heater that we plug in to keep the water from freezing. Almost every bird stops there to drink or to bathe, and the baths get quite vigorous - even during the winter months! The crows and mourning doves don't fit on our other feeders, but they do hit the bird bath. (It distresses us to see a crow bring a large piece of bread to the bird bath to soak so that it becomes more edible. Birds don't have a stomach that can digest bread, but people still put out bread for the birds in the winter.) We have squirrels and chipmunks that use the birdbath, and it is interesting to see who takes control.

Recently, several turkey vultures flew down to investigate the yard. They stayed for several minutes in trees at the edge of our yard and on our neighbor's chimney and all the other birds left the yard. Infrequently, the yard will suddenly empty of all birds without apparent reason. Sometimes you may see a bird tucked away in a bush in the yard when all the other birds have suddenly left. On those occasions, we look for a sharp-shinned hawk and have sometimes found that one has flown into the yard. We did see one fly in with a carcass from somewhere else. Another hawk flew in and they both left, fighting for possession. That was fortunate because we then didn't have to watch a bird being devoured.

We have two bird houses in our yard that were both occupied last year: one held a chickadee and the other a house wren. That was unusual because we seem to alternate between one and none occupied. There comes a day when the family picks up and moves out to find other feeding grounds. We have never witnessed the family exodus, as carefully as we have watched.

If any of you are interested in expanding your own backyard birding, we would recommend two things: adding water to your back yard increases bird activity, and David Allen Sibley's "Guide to Birds" has increased our knowledge and enjoyment of bird watching.

*Continued on page 3*

continued from page 2



*Please fill the bird bath!*



*Sharp-shinned hawk with squirrel carcass*



*Mourning dove in a snow shower*

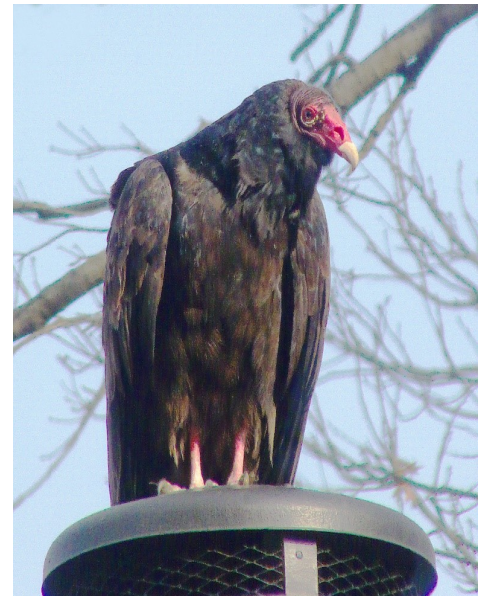


*Piliated woodpecker at the suet feeder*

Marylin and George Candler are selling their house on Pebble Hill Lane. They moved to an Assisted Living apartment in the Kentlands. We wish them all the best, but they will surely miss their backyard birding site.



*Chickadee at our bird house*



*A turkey vulture peers into our yard*



This hawk's nest is about sixty feet up in a fork in an oak tree right outside Linde Fuller's back door. The left-hand photo shows the fluffy head of one of the two eyas, i.e. nestlings. The right-hand photo shows one of the parents. They are red-shouldered hawks. Scott Young, a Westleigh neighbor, who bought a new telephoto lens especially for this project, came by every day for a month, with his wife Alice, to take pictures of whoever was visible in the nest. For a while, one of the fledglings would come by and sit on the deck railing for a minute or two. Now they are grown up and have left the nest. To have an experience like this one, you have to live in a special place like DuFief.

## New Board Member—Introduction

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by **Vin Kotraiah**

Hi! I am Vin. I have been a DuFief resident for 10 years. I remember deciding to move here right after noticing the abundant green space surrounding our home, and finding out about the good schools. We continue to admire our ready access to nature and hope that this remains a defining feature of our community. My wife and I have raised our daughter and son here, who are now in college and middle school. I work as a Program Manager in the Life Sciences area in the private sector.

I enjoy being outside and have developed an interest in converting my yard into a native-plant space. It is still very much a work in progress. Along the way, I have developed an understanding of the many county resources available to residents and have motivated some of my neighbors to understand the benefits of native plants. While I admit to not having been involved in the HOA until now, I am glad to start and hope to continue now that my children are grown. I look forward to serving our community and hope that I can spread awareness of protecting our Bay through more nature-friendly practices throughout DuFief.

*Vin, HOA President*

## Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

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by **Brian Frank**, *DuFief HOA Treasurer*

As of July 15, 2021, the Board has collected annual dues from 256 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (83.7%). The original notice for the 2021 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2021. 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, 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. Any homeowners that have not paid their dues are subject to potential lawsuit which will include a request for interest and attorney's fees and may result in a lien on the property.

**We have collected  
83.7% of 2021 dues.**

We have been very successful in collecting dues. All assessments have been collected for 2010 and years prior. There is one homeowner that has not paid dues for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018; five homeowners that have not paid 2019 dues; seventeen homeowners that have not paid 2020 dues, and fifty homeowners that have not paid 2021 dues.

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 their annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". For those of you who have not paid the 2021 dues in the amount of \$226.88, 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**, *HOA Treasurer*

# Recipe—Turmeric Roasted Cauliflower with Tomatoes

## Ingredients:

1/4 cup olive oil  
1 tsp sea salt  
1/2 tsp ground turmeric  
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

1 large head cauliflower,  
cut into florets (about 10 cups)  
12 oz. cherry tomatoes, halved  
(about two cups)

2 Tbsp chopped  
fresh cilantro



## Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 425 °F.
2. Mix oil, salt, turmeric, and cayenne pepper in small bowl. Place cauliflower and tomatoes in large bowl. Drizzle with 1/2 of the oil mixture; toss to coat well. Repeat with remaining oil mixture.
3. Spread vegetables in single layer on a foil-lined large shallow baking pan.
4. Roast 40 minutes or until cauliflower is tender, stirring halfway through cooking time. Sprinkle with cilantro before serving.

**Yield:** 10 servings

Recipe and photo from Tuft University Nutrition Letter.

Hello Everyone,

As you know, Kade McKeown, a boy scout in Troop 3, took it upon himself to replace the three old and unsafe benches around the DuFief pond with new ones, as his Eagle Scout Project, to do a service to the DuFief community.

The new benches are built with pressure-treated wood, have a backrest, are fixed to the ground, and so are safer and much more pleasant to sit on when visiting the pond.

Thank you, Kade!



*Old bench*



*New bench*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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The **Board of Directors** holds monthly meetings at **7:30 p.m.** on the 2nd Monday of each month. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for the third Thursday in February at **7:30 p.m.** The dates for the monthly meetings and the Annual Meeting are as follows:

August 9, 2021

September 13, 2021

October 11, 2021

November 8, 2021

December 13, 2021

January 10, 2022

February 14, 2022

February 17, 2022 – **ANNUAL MEETING**

March 14, 2022

April 11, 2022

May 9, 2022

June 13, 2022

July 11, 2022

The **Architectural Review Committee** holds monthly meetings at **4:00 p.m.** on the 1st Sunday of each month. The dates for the monthly ARC meetings are as follows:

August 1, 2021

September 5, 2021

October 3, 2021

November 7, 2021

December 5, 2021

January 2, 2022

February 6, 2022

March 6, 2022

April 3, 2022

May 1, 2022

June 5, 2022

July 3, 2022

## ANNOUNCEMENT re Annual Picnic

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Our **Annual Picnic**, which we usually hold at the DuFief pond on the third or fourth weekend in September, had to be canceled in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic.

Please respond to the survey that will be sent out shortly by the webmaster of [www.dufief.org](http://www.dufief.org). Your opinions will allow us to decide whether or not to schedule the picnic for September 2021.



**DuFief  
Homes  
Association**

**DuFief Homes Association Board**

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## **Announcement—Results of the Annual Meeting Elections**

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**New Board Members**

One new member—Vin Kotraiah (see introduction on page 4) —was elected to the DuFief Board at the Annual Meeting in February and agreed to serve as Board President. Dan Beal is the new member on the ARC.

Welcome!

All other Board or ARC members were reelected and are currently or have previously been members of the Board of Directors.

Thank you!



Eastern Song Sparrows and Redpoll

*photographed by Jean-Louis Staudenmann in his backyard.*

## 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 three 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 three-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 it 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."