



Tree Tops - President's Message

by Vin Kotraiah, HOA Board President

Greetings from the Board!

Your Board of volunteers continues to serve our community. We collated the responses received to the first stage of the community survey and have moved on to the second stage where we ask you to rank the submitted topics. We have also finalized the association landscaping contract for 2022 and have addressed a couple of drainage issues in the community. The pond area has three new benches and a county-provided recycling bin. The ARC has been busy, as always, and especially so this year, with home resales and remodeling applications.

Please participate in the monthly Board meetings and learn about current efforts and initiatives. Moreover, please plan to become a candidate for board or committee membership in the upcoming elections at the Annual meeting in February. Your increased participation in the community's affairs will help the Board make decisions that represent the community's voices.

The Board is also planning to embark on digitizing its records, and we need volunteers and ideas on how best to proceed on this challenging endeavor. Also, consider contributing articles to the *Readwood* to entertain your friends and neighbors with your creative endeavors and travels and also your thoughts on sustainability awareness, for example, or the nature around us, or any other topic of community interest, and help make the *Readwood* a relevant community newsletter.

Together we can make our DuFief community better and ensure that the Board works for everyone in the community. We strive to do the best for the community, but we are not perfect. So please bring any concerns to the Board and we will try to address them within the confines of our covenants and bylaws.

The monthly HOA meeting will be held on the second Monday of every month at 7:30 pm. For the time being, the meetings are conducted via Zoom. Please use this link to join:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3561039839>
The ARC Committee meets on the first Sunday of every month at 4:30 pm, also using the above Zoom link.

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GOING TO ITALY

by Howard and Hyeseon Yoon

My wife, Hyeseon, and I greatly enjoy traveling, especially to international destinations. It is said that the act of traveling can provide one with pleasant feelings in three different ways. One in planning and anticipation of travel, of course, during travel, and then in remembrance of travel. We usually plan our own travel itinerary and have been to such places as Angkor Wat, Machu Picchu, Bali, Rio de Janeiro as well as to European cities such as London, Paris, and Madrid, among others. We made plans to visit Italy and Turkey in 2020. However, due to the pandemic we were forced to stay at home, and when travel restrictions were lifted in 2021 we rebooked our flights to Italy for early Sept. 2021. We had to cancel our stay in Istanbul when Turkey was placed on the US State Department's Level 4 "Do Not Travel" list. Especially during the pandemic, we wanted to travel to places where our activities would be in mostly outdoor settings and decided that we should visit the Dolomites, a mountainous region north of Venice, which is known as an international hiking and rock climbing destination.

We stayed a couple of days in *Venice* before renting a car and driving to *Cortina d'Ampezzo* which is directly north of *Venice* in the heart of the Dolomite mountains. The Dolomites are named after a white carbonate rock which gives the mountains a distinctive white color. The numerous rock slides and the crushed rock walking paths mostly consist of this white gravel and powder. The Dolomite mountains and the northern *Veneto* plains were also the location of intensive fighting between Austria/Germany and Italy during World War I. The front lines went directly through the town of *Cortina d'Ampezzo*, and during our hikes we could visit still remaining dugouts and battery locations on mountain ridges that were used to control access to the valleys below. This war is described in Hemingway's famous novel,



At Tre Cime di Lavaredo, hiking back after lunch at Rifugio Locatelli. For lunch, we had spaghetti, local barley soup finished with apple strudel. We often state "noi condividiamo" or "we share" when we order in Italy to get extra plates and utensils to share our large portions.

"Farewell to Arms".

Hemingway was an ambulance driver on

the Italian side during this war and was injured by a mortar shell near the *Piave* river not far from *Venice*. In the book, his descriptions of river beds of white stone with clear running water which collect in blue pools are quite evocative of what we saw.



The rifugio at Croda da Lago. There is food and lodging at a system of rifugios in the Dolomites.

During the four full days we spent in *Cortina d'Ampezzo*, we hiked to *Croda da Lago*, *Cinque Torri*, *Tre Cime di Lavaredo* and *Cascate di Fanes*. The first three locations are the best-known hiking destinations in the Dolomites and are located above the timberline. Each day we walked for about five to nine miles. The hiking trails are well marked and are connected by an

extensive network of mountain huts/restaurants or *rifugios*. Although these are labeled as "huts", they are more like mountain hostels offering sleeping quarters (group and private bunk beds) and restaurants with local foods such as *penne pasta* with *bolognese* sauce, schnitzel, and apple strudel with local cream. Except for the last day, we hiked in the morning to a *rifugio* and then had lunch there. Since these *rifugios* need to

continued on page 3



A view of the town of Cortina d'Ampezzo from our hotel. Ski slopes can be seen on the other side. The 2026 Winter Olympics will be held here.

be supplied, there is also a jeep-accessible dirt road between them and it is possible to walk on these roads for an easier hike. Or one can choose a more rugged, narrow, pedestrian-only path linking them.

On the first day hiking to the *Croda da Lago*, we took a wrong turn and ended up going up a short section of a *ferrata*, which could be traversed only by hanging on to a steel cable with footholds cut into a rock face which was about a meter above a shallow creek. Hyeseon and I still talk about this close call.

After five nights in the Dolomites, we took a train to *Varenna* on the shores of *Lake Como* and spent a more leisurely vacation visiting *Bellagio* and lakeside villas and gardens.

On our way back to the US, we had to take a Covid test at most three days before our flight back to the US. We went to the *Venice* airport and had our 15 min-duration antigen test, which was negative and cleared us to come back to the US. Although travelling during the pandemic can be a challenge due to changing vaccination and testing requirements, we do not regret going to Italy. Next year we plan to visit the Basque country and Portugal.

Before doing exterior work to your home, please go to

www.dufief.org **Architectural Review**

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



Robin photographed by Jean-Louis Staudenmann



Stork carved by Jean-Louis Staudenmann

Max the “Mini” Pig

by Carter Gary

My name is Carter. I am 16 years old and the owner and caretaker (aka father) of Max, the “mini” pig. Last summer, during the pandemic, my mother and I were discussing pets we would love to own and I mentioned a pet pig. This made sense since I plan to study animal sciences in college, with the hope of becoming a veterinarian that focuses on exotic and farm animals. My parents felt having the responsibility of caring for my own pet would be a great learning experience and agreed to get me a pet pig as my Christmas gift. I found a reputable and very well-known breeder of “mini” pigs in Potomac, Maryland. A “mini” pig means one that will grow between 40 and 60 pounds, the size of a medium dog, who can easily live for 20 years.

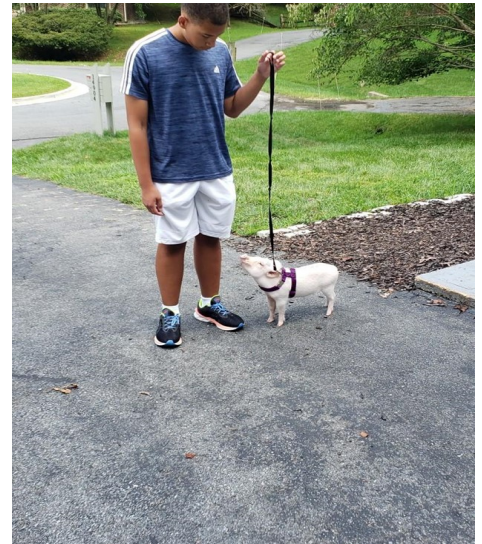
Max was born in early March and I received him in mid-May, making him 2-1/2 months old. He was very tiny, weighing in at only six pounds, and very shy at first (no... he is not shy anymore and demands attention). We had to create a kennel in our living room that he will live in until a year old, which is about the age they can completely control their bowels. Max is a very intelligent creature, with a hard head, who loves food. No surprise - a pig’s life revolves around food. His favorite food is watermelon and mini pig pellets, but truthfully, he will pretty much eat anything you give him, including ice cream. By the use of food, I have been teaching him house manners, and tricks as well.



Every morning around 7am and every evening around 6pm, Max screams for his meals. Pigs are so smart that they have an internal clock that reminds them of the exact time for feeding. Every morning, before heading out to school, I prepare his breakfast of one-fourth cup of pig pellets and water. Before I give Max his meals, I make him wait, quiet down and sometimes turn in circles before he can eat.

When he is done eating, he always goes to his fluffy bed, roots under his blankets, covers his body and then naps (pigs are great sleepers). At 11am and 3pm, my grandmother feeds a plate of snacks to Max, which are a mix of vegetables and fruits. Whenever he eats any of his meals or snacks, he always smacks really loud; it's hilarious to hear him do it. His sense of smell is so powerful that if you start cutting watermelon, cantaloupe or most fruits, even at a distance and out of his direct sight, he will start howling for a piece.

Once or twice a day, I walk Max on a harness and leash. When I first got him, he was too small to be walked, but once he reached eight pounds I was able to walk him for the first time. In order to keep him motivated to walk, I give him a cheerio every couple of blocks. The main reason why he wants to go on walks now is to get fed cheerios and to spend time alone with me. During our walks, I have gotten the chance to meet many of my very friendly neighbors and so has Max. My neighbors absolutely adore Max and call him the star of DuFief! It’s hilarious watching people’s facial expressions when they walk or drive by and see me walking a pig.



One of Max's favorite activities is playing on the deck with the dogs. We have two small chihuahua mixed dogs named Tommy and Chad, who are 7 years old. Tommy gets along with Max really well and they are best friends. They play and chase each other on the deck all the time. Chad, on the other hand, tries to avoid Max at all costs, which is hilarious to watch because Max is a playful critter and annoys Chad, who just walks away from him.

Max is an adorable little pink food monster whom I cherish with all my heart. While he can be loud and hard-headed sometimes, he’s my buddy and I tell him not to tell Chad and Tommy that he’s my favorite.

Feeding the Deer: Helpful or Harmful?

by **Dr. Jessica Kratchman**

Dr. of Public Health in Environmental Health

Sharing our lovely community with wildlife is one of the many attractive aspects of the DuFief community. Although it may seem like an act of kindness, feeding the wildlife is quite harmful to both humans and animals. Attracting deer and other wildlife towards human activities leads to increased risk for vehicle collisions. It also attracts less palatable creatures towards our homes and encourages animals to snack on our gardens! But did you know that supplemental feeding is very harmful to the animals?

Supplemental feeding of animals, in this case white-tailed deer, unequivocally leaves the animals at increased disease risk, long-term habitat destruction, increased vehicle collisions, habituation to humans, alteration of natural behavioral patterns and, eventually the degradation or destruction of the deer population's health and safety.

As such, let's become educated stewards of the environment! As you look around our community take a moment to consider the size of the groups that the deer travel in. Generally, you will notice the groups

are small. When we leave feed out for the animals in communal locations, it draws larger groups of animals together unnaturally, leading to aggression and social conflict. But most alarmingly this leads to the spread of communicable diseases within the population, which otherwise might be controlled naturally.

Feeding also concentrates the deer in a smaller area which leads to habitat destruction both for the deer and the other animals that rely on the ecosystem. Feeding deer, especially with high-calorie food, interrupts their natural seasonal feeding patterns and speeds up their metabolism, which inhibits their ability to survive the cold winters. It can also cause diarrhea, dehydration and death. This creates a situation where humans must continue feeding them and they become dependent upon our intervention.

Said best:

Supplemental feeding — however well intentioned — either compromises the animal's wildness or wellness, or it interferes with the essential natural processes of selection.

Check out these links,

if you have questions about repairs and possible service disruption by

WSSC Water

<https://www.wsscwater.com/discoledwater>

emergencycallcenter@wsscwater.com

Check out this video,

if you are interested in learning about new legislation to promote

More Composting for Montgomery County

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69S0-xDu2zc&feature=youtu.be>

(submitted by Fred Mingo)

DEALING WITH GARBAGE CANS

In its April 2004 issue the *Washingtonian Magazine*, in its article *50 Great Places to Live*, said the following about

DuFief

That '70s Showplace

Who would have thought that early-1970s earth tones and vertical siding would mellow into classic design? DuFief's contemporaries look so good after 30 years that a Greenwich Village transplant declared her home the perfect setting for her midcentury modern furniture.

This North Potomac neighborhood of about 300 homes (from \$400,000 to \$600,000) does more than show well: It's a rare, relatively affordable entrée to the popular Wootton High School cluster.

An annual picnic, a trail network, a fishing pond tucked onto acres of parkland, and an active homeowners' association keep the community close, and an active architectural-review committee keeps things looking cool. The area is buffered by woods and Muddy Branch Park, so not even the expansion of Route 28 intrudes on DuFief's serenity.

(Article submitted by Mary Bell)

Do you think that in January 2022

DuFief

would still qualify as a *Showplace* and one of the *50 Great Places to Live* in the Washington area?

Many of us residents don't think so. One of the reasons is that the main feature of almost one quarter of the homes in DuFief (78 as of last count) is a permanent display of trash and garbage cans in full view, either at the curb or somewhere in the front yard, even though Paragraph 6 of Article VI of the *DuFief Declaration of Covenants* prescribes:

"Trash and garbage containers shall not be permitted to remain in public view except on days of trash collection."

If the other 228 homeowners can find a place to hide their crash cans, why can't you! Please!

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

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:

January 10, 2022

February 14, 2022

February 17, 2022—**ANNUAL MEETING**

March 14, 2022

March 24, 2022—**NEWCOMER MEET AND GREET**

April 11, 2022

May 9, 2022

June 13, 2022

July 11, 2022

August 8, 2022

September 12, 2022

October 10, 2022

November 14, 2022

December 12, 2022

The **Architectural Review Committee** holds monthly meetings at **4:30 pm** on the first Sunday of each month. The dates for the monthly ARC Meetings are as follows:

January 2, 2022

February 6, 2022

March 6, 2022

April 3, 2022

May 1, 2022

June 5, 2022

July 3, 2022

August 7, 2022

September 4, 2022

October 2, 2022

November 6, 2022

December 4, 2022

DuFief School Construction Project—Update

by Maria Maslennikov



As of January 2020, The Montgomery County Board of Education has approved a \$30 million project to rebuild DuFief Elementary School in North Potomac. The project will increase the facility's capacity from about 430 students to 750 students, according to project documents. During the 2019-2020 school year, DuFief had an enrollment of about 315 students. At the start of the 2020-2021 school year the DuFief's principal Gregg Baron sent the following note:

“This message is intended to provide important information regarding the DuFief Elementary School construction project. DuFief Elementary School is currently scheduled for a facility upgrade/addition project with a completion date of September 2023. As part of this construction project, the school community is scheduled to relocate to a temporary school facility located in Rockville, in January 2022, during the 18 month construction project.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, over the past 18 months, the construction industry has experienced an unprecedented rise in material prices, disruptions in the supply chain, and staffing shortages, which have resulted in approximately a 23.0 percent increase in construction costs. Due to these extraordinary circumstances, there is a funding shortfall between the budgeted costs and actual planned expenditures for all capital projects in the adopted Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

With the current fiscal constraints facing our county and state, it was necessary to consider what could be done, as a school system, to address this funding shortfall while considering the needs of all students and staff in the county. After a thorough evaluation and review of all capital projects in the adopted CIP, the DuFief Elementary School Addition/Facility Upgrade project has been identified as a project to be recommended for delay.

This recommendation to the Board of Education will also allow for a review of the capacity and scale of a new building. The DuFief Elementary School project is currently designed to accommodate enrollment growth from Rachel Carson Elementary School. However, lower than anticipated enrollment necessitates a re-evaluation of the scope of work. This recommendation will be made at the September 9, 2021, Board of Education business meeting.

Therefore, at this point, all expenditures will be removed from the DuFief Elementary School Addition/Facility Upgrade project and funding for this project will be considered in the context of a full review of all capital projects as part of the FY 2023 Capital Budget and FY2023–2028 CIP. This project will have a TBD completion date until construction funds are approved in a future CIP.

MCPS will continue to monitor and address any systemic infrastructure needs at DuFief Elementary School until the funds for the capital project are secured and construction begins. In addition, the enrollment projections at Rachel Carson Elementary School will be monitored to determine if the current enrollment projection trajectory will continue.

A delay or deferral of a capital project is not a decision made lightly, understanding that the school community, looking forward to their capital project, will be disappointed by the change to their scheduled completion date. However, with limited capital funding, it was necessary to find a solution within the school system to address the unprecedented rise in construction costs. We are hopeful that the construction market will stabilize to allow MCPS to reconsider construction timelines and funding for any project that was delayed or deferred.

As a result of this action, DuFief Elementary will remain in our current building during the entire 2021-2022 school year, and we will NOT be relocating to the holding facility at Rock Terrace School beginning January of 2022.

Please be on the lookout for a future meeting with representatives with the Department of Facilities Management to address any questions or concerns you may have. “

As for the above article, all of that information continues to be the most accurate. Since I shared that, MCPS has proposed the latest Capital Improvements Plan budget for fiscal year 2022. In the plan, there is a request for money to be put aside for a feasibility study for the project, in which they will review the scope of the work to determine how to proceed. A previous feasibility study was last done in 2015.

Gregg Baron, Principal of DuFief Elementary School

Virtual Newcomer Meet and Greet

Announcement by the Welcoming Committee

We have welcomed many new neighbors to DuFief since the start of the pandemic. Without our annual fall picnic, we have been unable to host an in-person gathering. As such, the Welcoming Committee is excited to announce that we will be hosting a

Virtual Newcomer Meet and Greet on Thursday, March 24th at 6:00pm

via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3561039839>

While the event is specifically oriented toward newcomers, we invite all residents to attend and would be more than happy to have you. The more the merrier! Come meet your new neighbors!

Elizabeth Shakespeare, Chair, Welcoming Committee

Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

by **Brian Frank, DuFief HOA Treasurer**

At the October 2021 Board Meeting, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to increase the dues for 2022 by three percent (3%) pursuant to Article IV, Section 3(a) of the Declaration of Covenants. As such, **the Annual Assessment for 2022 will be \$233.68.**

Invoices for the dues were sent out at the beginning of January and are payable by the beginning of February 2022.

As of December 13, 2021, the Board has collected annual dues from 285 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 93.1%). 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 2021 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2021.

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 been very successful in collecting dues. All assessments have been collected for 2010 and all years prior. There is one homeowner that has not paid dues from 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018; two homes that have not paid 2019 dues; eight homes that have not paid 2020 dues, and 21 homes that have not paid 2021 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 your annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". For those of you who have not yet paid the 2021 dues in the amount of \$226.88, please do so as soon as possible in order to avoid additional costs, and a potential lawsuit.

Should you have any questions, please contact me via email— treasurer@dufief.org or by telephone — 240-606-5100.

Brian Frank, Treasurer

***We have collected
93.1 % of 2020 dues.***

DuFief Homes Association

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3034
Gaithersburg, MD 20885

[www.dufief.org]



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brenkworth@gmail.com

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

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Vice President: Fred Mingo—fmingo12@gmail.com
Treasurer: Brian Frank — treasurer@dufief.org
Secretary: Oksana Klebs—orzo@loc.gov

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Marcia Arieria—marciaariera@gmail.com
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Leilani Micalizzi—leilanik@gmail.com

Welcoming Committee :

Elizabeth Shakespeare—eshakespeare2@gmail.com

Nominating Committee for Election of 2022 new Board Members:

Fred Mingo— fmingo12@gmail.com
Susan Luff—smkluff@gmail.com

Election Announcement

The election of board and committee members is scheduled to take place at the Annual Homeowners' Meeting **on February 17, 2022.**

Because of Covid-19, it will again be conducted via Zoom.

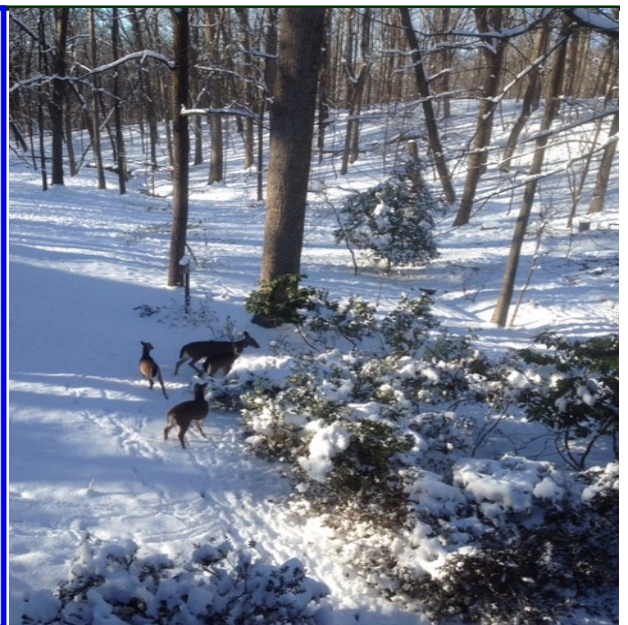
Please consider serving on the Nominating Committee; we could use your help. To sign up as a candidate, go to

<https://forms.gle/PkY1A666Tp5ZpJhz9>

or contact

[Fred Mingo—fmingo12@gmail.com](mailto:fmingo12@gmail.com)

Further information regarding the Annual Meeting will be sent to DuFief homeowners in the coming weeks.



photographed by Linde Fuller

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 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. If you have questions, CCOC prefers to be contacted by email at: CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov. To receive information by email about CCOC news and events, sign up for them by going to 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."