



READWOOD

DuFief Homes Association Newsletter Spring 2023

Tree Tops - President's Message

by Fred Mingo, HOA Board President

Dear Community,

My name is Fred Mingo, and I was recently elected as the President of our all-volunteer DuFief Homeowners Association (HOA). For those that don't know me I hope to meet you either virtually or in person in the future. As some background, for the past two years I served as our Vice President under Vin Kotraiah, and before that I was a Board member for the previous two years. For more about me and the other Board and volunteer committee members please see the accompanied biographies.

First off, I want to give a hearty shout out and say "Thank You Vin!" for his leadership, time, and commitment to our community. We kept busy and started several new initiatives I look forward to continuing throughout this next year. Again, Well Done Vin!

The Board has several ongoing projects and initiatives designed to improve community support I am championing this year. Please hear updates when you join our monthly Zoom HOA Board meetings; meeting details are available through your AppFolio portal or at our <https://dufief.org/> website.

1. The community survey.
 - a. The results of our first attempt to survey community priorities were inconclusive. We have restructured the questions into the SurveyMonkey system so please look for and help prioritize our community support activities.
2. Our AppFolio portal system transition.
 - a. 76% of our homeowners are now using our new system that greatly improves communications, scheduling, ARC submissions and more. Our goal is to have everyone using and benefiting from this new system.
 - b. Automation of the Architecture Review Committee (ARC) process.
 - c. Digitization of all DuFief HOA historical files and publication within AppFolio.
3. Careful stewardship of HOA funds and transparent community meetings and services.
4. Community outreach, social events, celebrating DuFief's 50th year and improved DuFief communications.

Hopefully you received your copy of the DuFief Homes Association Neighborhood Directory. The 2022 edition is the current directory, and the next edition is planned for 2024 release. Our HOA is no longer using the AtoZ Connect portal, instead, we will use our new AppFolio system to generate our 2024 community directory. I call out our directory because it includes our community Covenants and By-Laws and information. We plan updating this directory in 2024, but in the meantime you can find updated information on our web site <https://dufief.org/> Please let us know if you do not have a copy of this directory and we will get you a copy.

The website also includes a "members only" section with our Board meeting minutes and other information that can be accessed with our zip code, 20878. Our website includes an Architectural Review tab for our Architecture Review Committee (ARC) description and link for requests. We hold monthly HOA Board and ARC meetings that occur over Zoom; their schedule is also listed on the site. We are also in the middle of our transition to using the AppFolio property management system for conducting all of our community business. You should have already received a system generated request for establishing your personal portal from which you can pay your annual dues, view the community schedule, communicate with the ARC and much more as we roll out these and additional capabilities in the coming months.

I want to close with a sincere thank you to Linde Fuller for her 17 years as our Readwood editor and curator. She has spent countless hours reaching out to authors and Board members for inputs to ultimately publish a quality community newsletter. Well Done Linde!

SAVE THE DATE!



DuFief Annual Picnic Sunday, June 4 1-5 pm (Rain Date is June 11)

Our DuFief HOA is hosting a community picnic on the afternoon of Sunday, June 4th at our community DuFief pond and park. We hope you and your family can join us for complimentary food, drinks, games, and a chance to meet your neighbors and volunteers serving on your Board, and community committees. For those of you new to the neighborhood, the DuFief community pond and park entrance is located on Coles Chance Road, where a sign is designating the entrance.

Additional details will be available on your AppFolio community schedule and our <https://dufief.org/> website. As always, your DuFief HOA is looking for community volunteers to help coordinate this DuFief HOA picnic. Please volunteer by emailing board@dufief.org.

*If you are considering outdoor home improvements we will have the ARC's color pallet available for viewing.



HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY DUFIEF!

Fifty Years in DuFief
by Laura Weaver Huff

I can't believe it's been fifty years since I first walked through the front door of our brand new house in DuFief with my husband and two Wootton-bound kids from our blended family. We had initially searched for houses in the Wootton High school district, not too far from I-270, so when we found an

advertisement in the real estate section of the Post offering California Contemporary houses in a nearby development, we decided to check them out. We were especially excited to see that the ad

promised hard-to-find modern homes, built to complement the surrounding woods. In the end, it was the view from the dining room window of the woods, leading to park land on the right, that sold us on this house.

Years after everyone left home, I still look out that window and appreciate the woodsy scene, which changes dramatically with each season. As a nature lover, I especially enjoy seeing wildlife, such as red foxes or deer running through my yard. No, I don't like having to use a repellent to keep the deer from eating my hostas and daylilies, but when I discovered a new-born fawn among the ferns by my garage one year, I excused their eating habits!

Since way back, I've enjoyed watching woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice and many more birds at my feeder, but several years ago I noticed bluebirds in my yard, coming for the suet hanging above the feeder. This year one pair is very interested in my new bluebird house and I hope they will raise a family in it. This brings me special joy since I never saw a bluebird until I moved to DuFief.

These are the things I love about DuFief. I wish I could be as happy with the way our community looks after fifty years. Driving around I see properties that no longer harmonize with their neighbors'. House and trim colors now include every imaginable shade, straying far from the original earth tones that blend with our wooded environment. This change was apparent after vinyl siding was allowed some years ago. Vinyl does not look like wood -- it warps and shines in the sun and encourages mildew, especially on the north side. However, homeowners can still have a wood look that is also long-lasting by using fiber cement siding.

Doors are also a problem. People think they are upgrading their houses when they use Colonial or Victorian style front doors, but the correct style is back to the original houses – simple flat flush doors, painted a different shade from the house color. They are the modern style that goes with the architecture of these homes. If people prefer front doors with an oval pane of glass in the center, like those found in old-fashioned Victorian houses, or paneled doors from Colonial times, they should buy in Kentlands, a planned 19th century community. Ours is a contemporary development and there are not many around for people who prefer that choice.

When homeowners plan to repaint their houses or make other changes, I urge them to apply first to the DuFief Architectural Control Committee, whose job is to ensure that our properties are maintained appropriately, according to the written By-Laws.

Meet our 2023 Board Members

Officers:

President: Fred Mingo



I was first elected to the Board in 2019, I was the HOA Vice President then elected as President this year. I am married to Sandi Shapiro, and joined her in her home at 11553 Brandy Hall Lane where she has lived since 1996. Together we have five adult children living in the greater DC area and two small rescue dogs that all take time, love, and attention. I was born and raised in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, attended Miami University (of Ohio) and then joined the U.S. Navy. I started my career flying as a pilot for almost 20 years and then transitioning into information technology in 1997 and retired as a captain in 2006. I then worked as a consultant in the DC area for almost 10 years before being recruited into the Department of Veteran Affairs to help lead a major healthcare modernization program, retiring in the summer of 2021.

I keep active hiking, biking (often on our Muddy Branch trail or the Potomac towpath), working out in our gym, swimming, traveling, reading, playing games, gardening, volunteering and with our home improvement projects. We love our home, the DuFief community, the greater DC area and have no intention of moving. We have continually modernized our home with an eye to fit into our community. Please feel free to reach out or stop over if you want to see what we have done and or if we can be of assistance.

Vice President: Pam Weld

My name is Pam Weld. I live at 11525 Brandy Hall Lane with my husband Jack and our English Springer Spaniel Beauregard (Beau). Jack is the original owner of our home and has lived here since May of 1972. Over the past fifty-one years we have raised four boys, had three springer spaniels, and walked hundreds of miles in the woods long before there were any trails. We have watched the trees grow from tiny to huge and generations of kids from babies to parents. We are now the grandparents of nine! It is truly hard to believe! Twenty years ago we began looking for our ideal retirement home. It didn't take us long to realize we were already in it. So here we still are, and very happy to have made the right decision. DuFief is a special place and I hope many more generations will enjoy it as much as we have.

Secretary: Ron Ely

I grew up in PA and my wife and I moved here in 2005. We have two sons and a dog, and I enjoy running on the Muddy Branch trail and training for ultramarathons. I ran for the board to advocate for the right of individual homeowners to live their own lives in their own way without new restrictions or liabilities being imposed on them.

Treasurer: Brian Frank



I have been a board member and Treasurer of the DuFief Homes Association for nearly 15 years. I have been an owner since 2004. I love this community and its many treasures, including the pond plus the location is perfect. In my spare time I am an attorney in Rockville with a general practice.

Board Members:

Donna Freshwater



I grew up in Ohio, moved to Georgia in 1982 for active duty enlisted Army service at Fort McPherson. I did a number of tasks to include admin, personnel, and contracting. After leaving the Army I received a BSc. in Information Systems.

We moved to Maryland in 1990, rented for several years, before finding our home in DuFief. Many hours were spent renewing the interior; so much so that one of my Christmas presents was a DeWalt compound sliding miter saw. Another Christmas gifted me a Paslode finish nailer. They have both been used extensively to this day. In fact, I just gifted myself a brad nailer.

I was also a soft sculpture artist, and traveled frequently to shows up and down the east coast, with two amazing trips to Germany as well. Since then, I spend many hours wielding my self-taught handywoman skills in and around the property, all the while contemplating ideas to improve the exterior appearance. Siding and new windows finally happened (Yay!). Now, I hope for someone to give me great landscaping ideas.

DIY is my hobby, baking is a my diversion, taking care of my two rescue pups is my passion. You'll often find me trudging around the yard pushing a lawnmower, but not enjoying it very much. Gotta keep moving forward.

Linde Fuller



After about 17 years of editing and producing the Readwood two or four times a year, I thought it was time to let someone else take a turn. I am thankful that Sandi Shapiro volunteered to do it. She used to produce the neighborhood newsletter in the early 1990s, and so she knows what it takes, and I know that she can look forward to a willingness of our neighbors to contribute stories and advice on a great number of subjects. Thank you everyone for your support, and long live Readwood!

Bill Golumbfskie

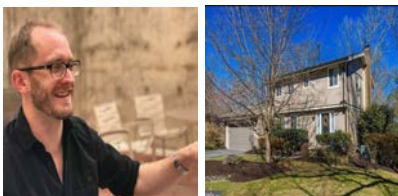
(bio unavailable)

Shawn McClosky



Born and raised in Maryland, Shawn left to earn his Bachelor's degree in Sociology at York College of Pennsylvania before ultimately landing in the Rockville area in 2008. He came to the area to start a career in transportation behavioral research at Westat. As a project manager, he has overseen nearly a dozen regional, statewide, and national household travel surveys. During this time, he met his beautiful wife, Sara McCloskey, started a family, and planted roots in the area. As their family grew from a loveable Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Rocky, to two young energetic boys, so did the need to expand beyond their small starter home in downtown Rockville. In October 2020, we found our forever home in the Dufief neighborhood. As an avid runner and lover of the outdoors, the proximity to both nature and amenities was the perfect blend. We have enjoyed spending countless days on the Muddy Branch Creek Trail and, when they are of age, we look forward to walking our two boys to school at DuFief Elementary.

Jared Smith



Originally from Harrisburg, Jared grew up in central Pennsylvania where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Chemistry at Bucknell University followed by a PhD in Neuroscience at the Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey. While working at Penn State's main campus, Jared met and married the love of his life, Beth Shakespeare, and they added their loud but lovable companion, a beagle named Henry. Together they lived in San Diego, CA for 4 years while Jared completed a post-doctoral research fellowship at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, and they achieved their greatest accomplishment of welcoming their son Theodore (Teddy) to the family. In 2019 the family moved to Maryland where Jared took a job directing the neurology research at a local biotech company, REGENXBIO Inc, developing gene therapies for a variety of diseases. In April of 2020, the family was fortunate to find home-sweet-home at 11521 Brandy Hall Lane in the beautiful DuFief neighborhood where Teddy currently attends kindergarten at DuFief Elementary and Henry begins his days barking at the hikers on the Muddy Branch Creek Trail.

Architectural Committee Members

Herman Basra



Herman Singh Basra has lived in and been an active member of the Dufief community since August 2012. Herman and his wife, Mrs. Manpreet Kaur, have two children Alisye Kaur (13) and Iqsaiv Singh (5), who have/will attend Dufief Elementary School.

Don Beal



Dan has lived here since August 2020 with his wife and 2 kids. Dan plays pickleball at the local lifetime, and enjoys golf.

Mandy Pereira



My family first moved to Dufief in 1986, and even after I left for college and moved out on my own, I always loved the feeling of turning into Dufief from Route 28, driving under the arching trees that frame the entrance. It felt like home, long after it technically wasn't anymore. When my husband and I had the chance to buy my parents's house in 2017, we jumped at the opportunity. The calm and cozy feel of the neighborhood, the trees, and the parks are still some of my favorite things about living here, but now that we have a child attending Dufief Elementary School, in a classroom with my picture outside of it from my days there, we've had the opportunity to get to know so many other families, and we feel like our family is really part of a community. I've so appreciated everything that this neighborhood has given me since I was a kid, so serving on the Architectural Review Committee seemed like one way to make a contribution back to the community.

William Washington ARC Chairman

(bio unavailable)

For the Dufief Community's architectural guidelines for renovations, repairs and additions in accordance with maintaining the California Contemporary design Miller and Smith created in 1973.

Please go to www.dufief.org/architectural-review for an application before doing work on the exterior of your home.

Webmaster: Barbara Brentworth



My name is Barb Brenkworth. I'm the webmaster for DuFief HOA. I live on Happy Choice Lane and I purchased this home in 1991. I retired from an IT position with the National Weather Service in 2005 and freelance, providing wordpress website and IT support to individuals and organizations. I work part-time for Maxsold, an online auction for downsizing, moving, and otherwise getting rid of all of the stuff people accumulate in a lifetime! I'm on the Board of Directors of Little Longears Miniature Donkey Rescue in New Oxford PA which is a sanctuary for donkeys, mules, ponies, and a few select horses! I love to run, bird watch, tend my garden, and read. I value the peace and quiet of this neighborhood above everything else.

Welcoming Committee Chairwoman: Beth Shakespeare



In 2020 our family moved to Dufief and were so excited to buy a home in this neighborhood, with the breathtaking natural scenery. Having recently moved to Maryland, we were ready to meet our neighbors and make new friends in the community, which is why I joined the Welcoming Committee. It has been a wonderful experience and I have enjoyed getting to know more people and learning about the area!

Welcoming Committee: Alicia Clausen

(bio unavailable)

Readwood Editor: Sandi Shapiro



I am pleased to support the Dufief HOA as the Readwood Editor. I was raised in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. Fortunately, MCPS offered me a teaching job while at Miami University if I moved to the area. Off I went and began my teaching career. Being familiar with the great reputation of Dufief ES, I wanted to move to the area to send my children there. I was awestruck when I found our home that backs to the woods on a beautiful street. I have lived in DuFief on Brandy Hall Lane since 1996. I raised 2 daughters here and now enjoy my home with my husband, Fred Mingo and our 2 rescue chihuahua mixes. Our yard is a favorite spot for our 3 rescue granddogs.

After retiring from MCPS as an elementary teacher for 32 years, I tutor and coach students who have ADHD/Anxiety challenges. In addition, I enjoy gardening, exercising, walking, traveling and spending time with our blended family of 5 adult children.

Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

As of May 8, 2023, the Board has collected annual dues from 284 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 92.8%). 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 2023 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2023. Additional copies of the invoices have been mailed and emailed to homeowners.

The annual assessments are used primarily to maintain our common areas in order to keep the DuFief neighborhood a popular area for homebuyers. 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 from 2011 through 2019; two (2) homes that have not paid 2020 dues; five (5) homes that have not paid 2021; twelve (12) homes that have not paid 2021 dues and twenty-two (22) homes that have not paid 2023 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 two years of dues, a lawsuit is likely to be filed.

For those who have paid your annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU". For those who have not paid the 2023 or owe for prior years, 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

Noteworthy News



My Unfortunate Introduction to Radon
by Donna Freshwater

We moved to Dufief in April 1993. The usual inspections (at the time) were performed, and we closed on the property. It had everything I wanted - a single family home with a yard, in a lovely quiet neighborhood, great neighbors, and it was the right price. To say it was a bit of a fixer-upper would be an understatement.

Sometime later a neighbor told me a prospective buyer had been interested in the property and requested a radon test. The results came back high, and the potential buyer walked away. We weren't informed by the agent of this before, during, or after the closing. Only much later from the neighbor who happened to know the previous interested party. My response was "oh, hmm, okay", and it was forgotten.

It came to my attention again recently via a friend and neighbor who was having a radon mitigation system installed. Googling radon, and the information I found, planted a sense of urgency to find my radon numbers. I purchased a radon monitoring system, and numbers varied from 4 to 8. I immediately contacted a radon repair expert and after the mitigation system was installed, the reading dropped overnight from 6 to 0.4, and has remained at 0.3 to 0.4 since. A dramatic result.

Maryland is considered to be a high-radon state and Montgomery County is listed as a zone 1 threat on the state's radon map. Zone 1 includes the counties that have the highest risk of radon .

Radon is an invisible, radioactive gas created during the natural breakdown of uranium in rocks and soils. In an outdoor environment the gas disperses quickly and is not considered to be a threat to humans. However, in the closed confines of a typical home there can be higher levels of radon that pose a serious health threat to the occupants. It is estimated that the second most common cause of lung cancer in the US is due to the presence of radon in residential dwellings. Where high levels of radon are present in the soil, the gas can seep into homes through cracks and holes in the foundation floor and walls.

On October 1st, 2016 a new radon law in Montgomery County went into effect. As of that date a single family home or townhouse (with some exceptions) that is under contract cannot go to settlement until there is a radon test done on the home. It has always been possible for a purchaser to do the radon test by including a radon test addendum in their offer. However, now if the purchaser does not have a test done, then it is the seller's responsibility to provide the test before closing.

No matter where you live, test your home for radon—it's easy and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local big-box home improvement stores. Fix your home if your radon level is 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher. Consider fixing if your level is between 2 and 4 pCi/L.

EPA Maps and Supplemental Information:

<https://www.epa.gov/radon/epa-map-radon-zones-and-supplemental-information>

Montgomery County Radon Action:

<https://mygreenmontgomery.org/2023/radon-january/>

Montgomery County Radon Resources:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/air/radon.html>

Montgomery County Radon Home Buyers Guide:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/Resources/Files/air/radon-home-buyers-guide-epa.pdf>

So, how much might it cost for radon mitigation?:

- Basement homes will likely cost less since the mitigation equipment is installed inside, and not exposed to weather - approximately \$900.00
- Slab homes require outside installation and require weather resistant equipment approximately \$1,200.00



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

This is your space to offer or ask for services from Dufief neighbors. Do you babysit, petsit, yard work help, offer or need a ride? If you would like to list a service or a request on our Summer Readwood, please email me at board@dufief.org.

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. 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."