



*For Board and Committee  
Meeting Dates,  
please see calendar  
on the last page.*

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## **Fabulous Fall**

...means cool weather, colorful leaves, Halloween and Thanksgiving dinner. It also means it's time to prepare your home and garden for winter. We hope you find these suggestions on how to winterize your home, tips on holiday costume safety and turkey feast planning ideas useful. This issue of Limelight also includes an update on annual inspections, current community projects and upcoming events, the latest Loft Ridge real estate information and other items of interest to homeowners in our beautiful community!

## **HOA Annual Inspections Update**

By now, all properties with identified repairs or maintenance issues should have received a letter from management indicating what exterior items should be addressed. This letter again details the more stringent violations enforcement policy established in 2008, which applies violations assessments to unresolved prior-year violations. If you did not receive a letter but wish to make certain there are no pending violations for your property, please email [management@loftridge.com](mailto:management@loftridge.com) and include your name and Loft Ridge address (unfortunately, our attorney has advised us not to send "No Violations" letters, in the event a violation is inadvertently omitted and a homeowner uses the "No Violations" letter to claim that the violation was approved by omission).

Homeowners receiving 2009 exterior maintenance letters may see one of the following:

1. Yard and Landscaping violations with a 30-day deadline to make corrections;
2. Structural violations with a 90-day deadline for making repairs and/or corrections;
3. A list of prior year violations, asking for immediate correction and reminding homeowners that violation assessments have been accruing since April 2009.

Follow-up landscaping and yard inspections will be underway in the near future, and follow-up inspections to check the status of structural violations will take place in early November. After the second round of follow-up inspections, homeowners with unresolved violations will receive a letter from management notifying them of the open status of their ongoing violations and any potential actions that may be taken by the Association.

As always, if you have any questions about the inspection process or something you were cited for, please email [management@loftridge.com](mailto:management@loftridge.com).

### **Why did I get a violations notice when my neighbor has several violations that aren't getting fixed?**

This is a commonly asked question, and the answer is simple: please don't assume that because you see open or ongoing violations on another property that they haven't been cited or the Association is not working to get them resolved. It is ongoing violations such as these that led to the more stringent policy for getting violations resolved, and the Association is doing everything it can to get these addressed so property values continue to rise and remain as high as possible.

Additionally, the Board, ACC and management have gone to great lengths to ensure that violations are cited consistently, so rest assured that if you've been cited for a particular violation, so has everyone else with the same issue!

# Loft Ridge Projects Update

Plans for **Curb and Sidewalk repair** continue as the Association works to reduce projected costs and limit disruption to homeowner property. Since November 2008 the Board has consulted with four different vendors on ways to repair sidewalk trip hazards and repair damaged curb sections. It is hoped that work will be completed in September or October 2009.

**Sod and Turf Renovation** of targeted areas continues throughout the community with the latest round completed on Gingham Court and several areas on Ridge View Drive. Anyone willing to water regularly and wishing to have sod or turf renovation in their area should contact the board at [board@loftridge.com](mailto:board@loftridge.com). Hoses and sprinklers can be provided and homeowners will be reimbursed for water.

**Pruning and Removal of Dead Trees** was completed in June and July. A third round of dead tree removals is scheduled for late September, and will also include a few plantings at the tennis court area, Medallion Court and Lofthill Court.

Plans for **Landscaping** of the tennis court area are currently underway. To save money and allow for more landscaping, volunteers are being solicited. If you're available to help out with some digging or planting, please contact the board.

Installation of **Irrigation for Lofthill Court** is in progress, and we are currently waiting for Fairfax County Water to install a water connection. Once complete, the irrigation system will be installed and sod and turf renovation of bare areas will get underway.

Work to fill cracks and seal coat **Asphalt Pathways** was completed in August 2009.

Proposals for **Seal Coating** community streets and repairing **Split Rail Fencing** are currently being solicited; it is expected that work on both projects will take place in spring or summer of 2010.

Lastly, Loft Ridge has been working with Fairfax County to address the **Creek Erosion** behind Churchman Court for over 2 years. Although a plan was developed in spring 2008, Fairfax County has linked this project to development of a **Bioretention Area** on Gypsy Court (to control groundwater runoff). However, plans for the bioretention area have not been completed, and due to county budget problems it is unlikely that either project will be resolved this year.

## Winterizing Your Home

### Inside the House

- Close vents to unused rooms - Why heat a room nobody uses?
- Dress for the cold - Grandpa's trick of lowering the thermostat and putting on a sweater is one sure-fire way to lower energy bills. Heating blankets also work well.
- Reverse the direction of ceiling fans - Fan blades should be turning clockwise in the winter; counterclockwise in the summer.
- Use bathroom ventilation fans less - These fans draw heat out of the house. Use them sparingly in winter.
- Have the furnace cleaned and checked - The average cost is around \$100-\$125. If that price is too steep, make sure the filter is changed regularly because a dirty filter can impede air flow.
- Insulate the attic - 12 inches of insulation are recommended regardless of climate. If you're adding a layer of insulation on top of another layer, make sure not to use kraft face (i.e., paper-backed) insulation because it can create a vapor barrier and lead to moisture problems.

### Inspect Gutters, Chimney & Outside Faucets

- Clean the gutters - Clogged drains can form ice dams.
- Check the chimney - Close the chimney damper when not in use. If you use your fireplace, have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned when needed.
- Drain and disconnect hoses - Shut off water bibs, drain hoses, and wrap any outside pipes in October to avoid freezing and bursting.
- Insulate electrical outlets - Install inexpensive precut foam pads behind electric outlet plates.

### Check Doors & Windows

- Face or replace single paned windows - There are tax incentives to replacing inefficient windows this year. However, less-expensive options include using plastic window insulator kits. The kits are cheap and the plastic sheeting is easy to install.
- Stop drafts at the door - Install weather stripping or a door sweep on exterior doors.
- Seal air leaks - Invest in a professional energy audit, or simply walk around the house with a lit stick of incense on a breezy day to check for drafts. Seal leaks with caulk or spray foam. If caulk is brittle, it is no longer working. EnergyStar.gov estimates that home sealing can reduce energy bills by as much as 10%.

## Don't Miss the Burgundy Farm Country Day School's Fall Festival!

Not enough time or energy to drive to one of the surrounding area's pumpkin patches this fall? Look no further.

There's a great fall festival right around the corner at the Burgundy Farm Country Day School, one of the oldest community activities in the area. This year's fair will be on **Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.** Just follow the signs on Franconia Road.

Activities will include games, a bake sale, a haunted house, an artisan fair, kid's closet sales, face painting as well as musical entertainment. Come hungry and bring your wagon to carry home your hand-crafted scarecrow or painted pumpkin!

## 5th Annual Loft Ridge Halloween Parade

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m.**

**Rain Date: Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> at 3 p.m.**

Don't let the parade leave without you. The start location is the corner of Caprice Court and Ridgeview Drive. Please be prompt!

After the parade, there will be treats, games, and maybe even some tricks!

More parade details will be available in the official parade flyer distributed two weeks prior to the event. Information will also be posted on the Loft Ridge Group list serve and the Loft Ridge Mom's list serve.

## National Night Out

On Tuesday, August 4th the Loft Ridge community came together for a unique event to increase awareness of crime and drug prevention in the area, the National Night Out. It also gave the community an opportunity to meet and ask questions of our local police department. Delegate Mark Sickles even made an appearance to come and show his support for our community, as well.

The event turned out well with a moon bounce providing hours of entertainment for the children of the community and ample refreshments for neighbors of all ages. This event provided everyone with a great feeling that this community will not stand for any criminal activities within our confines. Special thanks to everyone in the community who donated their time or baking talents to the event!

## Halloween Etiquette and Costume Safety Tips

If you plan to take part in the trick-or-treat ritual with the ghosts and goblins which will be out this year, common practice is to turn on your front porch light. In addition to signaling a welcome beacon, it will also make it easier for the little tykes to climb steps since some are wearing long garb or heavy costumes.

Parents normally accompany their children and door-knocking respectfully starts after dinner time (around 6 p.m.) and ends about 8 p.m. Remember, individually wrapped treats make it easier for the parents to decide if their children will be allowed to enjoy their loot.

When getting ready to trick-or-treat with your princesses, pirates, ghosts and goblins, consider the following tips that will help make your Halloween safe and fun:

- Choose costumes that are labeled "Flame Resistant."
- Do not dress your children in costumes that are overly large or loose fitting (to avoid tripping or igniting their costume if they pass near an open flame).
- Make sure all masks fit securely and your child can see well through eye holes.
- Add reflective tape to the front and back of costumes and shoes.
- Consider taking a flashlight along to help light the way and make your children more easily seen.
- Tell your children not to eat any candy until you've had a chance to inspect it.



For more information, see the list of Halloween Safety Tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/PRHTML99/99011.html>

## Putting Your Garden to Bed For the Winter



- **Rake up leaves and yard debris.** Tip: the debris can be used as mulch to protect your tender plants over the winter.
- **Cut back unsightly dried out perennials** or leave seed heads as a treat for the birds over winter.
- Fall is the best time to **divide most perennials**, like irises and day lilies. The upside is that you will end up with healthier plants and more blooms next year than if you wait until spring to divide.
- **Weed.** Believe it or not a good fall weeding will save a lot of work in the spring. Most plants are not dormant in the winter. Their roots are growing. Now is the time to cut back weeds and invasive plants, which tend to grow a great deal in the winter.

- **Dig up and store tender annual bulbs**, e.g., dahlias, begonias, cannas and gladiolas. Wipe off dirt and store the bulbs in vermiculite in a paper bag in a cool, dry spot.
- **Apply mulch to protect perennials.** A four to eight inch layer is recommended. Tip: avoid "free" mulch or top soil for anything but filling a hole because it is often not pasteurized and, therefore, full of "live" seeds for weeds and other invasives.
- Fall is the best time to **fertilize gardens** in the Chesapeake Bay area because spring and early summer fertilizing causes run off problems that negatively impact crab and other sea life. Consider a light application of organic fertilizers, like pasteurized cow manure or mushroom mulch. Not only are these fertilizers less expensive than chemical fertilizers, but are less likely to be over-applied – which is a sure-fire way to kill plants and grass.



- **Water evergreens, small trees and shrubs** well in the fall to prevent drying over the winter. Also consider treating broad-leaved evergreens, such as rhododendrons and holly, with an antidesiccant spray to prevent drying.
- **Wrap shrubs** in burlap to prevent damage caused by heavy snow and ice.
- **Consider taking cuttings of annuals** now to reduce gardening expenses next year. Plants like caladium, coleus, and sweet potato can simply be clipped and placed into water near a window to root; other plants like geraniums can be clipped, coated with rooting hormone and placed directly into moist soil to root. By spring, the "new" plants will be ready for planting outside.
- **Move your potted plants inside** or to a well-lit area outside that is not likely to receive much snow. Also protect terra cotta pots by bringing them indoors.



- **Trim trees and branches near windows.** The weight of snow and ice can fell branches and cause damage to windows and/or the roof.
- **Wrap trunks of recently planted trees**, especially those with thin bark, to protect them from sunscald, which is caused by drying bark and fluctuating temperatures.
- **Plant spring-blooming bulbs** such as crocuses, daffodils, tulips and hyacinths this fall for a beautiful yard in the spring.
- Fall is actually a great time to **test soil**. Once you know your soil's needs, you can add amendments like manure, bone meal and lime to adjust pH and drainage or to increase organic matter.
- **Remember the birds.** Consider installing birdfeeders or thistle feeders for winter birds. Birds also need water during the winter, so consider using a birdbath in the winter months too.





# Why Thank You!

In keeping with Loft Ridge tradition, we'd like to take a moment and thank all the residents who have helped out in our community. From the volunteers on the ACC and Communications Committees to those who've helped with special events like the Easter Egg Hunt and National Night Out, we extend our heartfelt appreciation, and sincerely thank you for all your time and efforts. You've helped keep our neighborhood looking great, made sure our residents stay informed, provided entertaining ways for neighbors to get together and most importantly, brought smiles to the faces of our youngest residents!

Thanks also to those who help water trees and plantings in the community, and to those who regularly pick up loose trash (something we could use more help with!). A special thanks is also due to the brave souls who regularly empty the dog waste stations and community trash cans; their efforts are way beyond the normal call of "doody," so if you happen to see one of these wonderful people performing this important community service, please be sure to let them know how much their efforts are appreciated!

Lastly, a special thanks to those who serve on the board. Sure, being on the board may seem exotic and glamorous, and the benefits enormous -- but if you've ever gotten an angry email or been given the cold shoulder by a disgruntled resident, or given up most of your weekend on a community project, then you quickly realize how un-glamorous it can be. Even if you don't always agree with every decision, everyone who serves on the board deserves our thanks and appreciation for hanging in there when things get heated, and for all the time and effort they freely give on our behalf.

So once again, thanks to everyone who has helped make Loft Ridge a better place for all of us!

## Meet New Loft Ridge Board Members

**Tom Albert** has lived in the community for almost five years. He is a Mechanical Engineer with Commonwealth Technology, Inc., and loves his short commute to offices in Kingstowne and the Naval Research Laboratory, just over the Wilson Bridge. He is a New York transplant, growing up on Long Island, and attending college at S.U.N.Y at Buffalo for his engineering degree. He and his wife, Heather, have one son, Tyler, 18 months old, and are hoping to add a dog to the mix shortly. Tom and his family were drawn to the community by the short commuting distance to DC (Heather works in DC) and the wealth of well maintained green spaces and play areas that the community offers. You can see them taking regular walks in the evening, following after busy Tyler.

**Bruce Purdy** currently serves as a Senior Program Manager for the Small Business Administration. He manages the data system in which SBA collects information on all counseling and training provided to entrepreneurs under three major grant programs. He is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and serves as the chair of the Stewardship Ministry. Bruce moved to Loft Ridge in 2008.

**Lisa Staresina** has lived in Loft Ridge for five years. She is married and has two girls ages 2 ½ and 4 ½. Currently, she is a stay-at-home mom. Before that, she was a research associate at Education Week. Lisa has a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in public policy. She was raised in New Mexico and moved east to attend graduate school in Baltimore. Lisa was active in the community before becoming a Board Member by organizing several Halloween parades and the first Easter Egg Hunt. Lisa decided to run for a Board position because she was inspired by the volunteerism of members of the Loft Ridge community and wanted to give something back in a meaningful way.

## Did You Know...

...that hard-wired smoke detectors, like those used in Loft Ridge homes, should be replaced every 10 years?

According to the National Fire Protection Association ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)):

- At 10 years, about 73% of smoke alarms should still be operational when powered;
- After 20 years, only 54% of the alarms may be expected to work; and
- 65% of reported home fire deaths in 2000-2004 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

If your home still has its original smoke detectors or you don't know when the smoke detectors in your home were last replaced, please consider replacing your smoke detectors. *It could save your life!*



# It's that time of year again! It is time to plan Thanksgiving dinner!

Planning Thanksgiving dinner for a small family gathering or a large crowd can be overwhelming sometimes... Here are some suggestions how to make sure that your dinner goes off without a hitch and you enjoy a stress-free meal!



- Create a schedule starting with the Saturday before Thanksgiving that includes everything from what house cleaning needs to be done to where you will do your shopping.
- Write down the recipes you want to use and make a shopping list. If you want to try a new recipe but are unsure how it will come out – give it a trial run the week before.
- Decide what can be done ahead of time – washing lettuce and vegetables, chopping, making cranberry relish or frozen dessert, etc.
- Have a separate cooking schedule that will indicate when the turkey goes in, what time the potatoes need to be started, when to do the gravy.
- Clean out your refrigerator to make room for your holiday items.
- Make your pies, cheesecake, rolls, etc. ahead of time and freeze.
- A few days before dinner take out your serving dishes and put a post-it note on each dish indicating what recipe it will hold.
- Set your table the day before the gathering.

## Some turkey tips:

**Thawing the turkey** – it is best to thaw the turkey in the refrigerator: an 8 -12 lbs bird takes 1 to 2 days; a 12 - 16 lbs one – 2 to 3 days and so on. You will know when it is ready.

**Cooking the turkey** – generally the rule is 10-18 lbs cook for 3 to 3 ½ hours; 15 - 22 lbs for 3½ to 4 hours; 22 to 24 lbs for 4 to 4½ hours. If the turkey is stuffed, it will add at least an hour to your cooking time. Whether roasting or grilling, use a meat thermometer so you'll know when the turkey reaches a safe internal temperature. Insert the meat thermometer in the thickest part of the inside thigh muscle so the thermometer does not touch bone.

**Basting the turkey** - basting promotes a moist, flavorful turkey. Baste or brush the turkey with pan juices every 30 to 60 minutes of cooking time.



## If you're looking for some recipes:

Here are some you can get by emailing Loft Ridge gourmet chef Bob Lucas at [blucas2@verizon.net](mailto:blucas2@verizon.net) and indicating which one(s) you would like to have. They are not all tested but should work well:

- Simple Roast Turkey, Perfect Roast Turkey, another Roast Turkey or Roasting a Frozen Turkey.
- Fluffy Mashed Potatoes, Fluffy Potato Casserole or Make Ahead Mashed Potatoes.
- Easy Turkey Gravy, Classic Turkey Gravy, Giblet Turkey Gravy or Do Ahead Gravy.
- Traditional Stuffing or Stuffing for Crockpot.
- Glazed Sweet Potatoes or Sweet Potato Soufflé.
- Antique Broccoli, Green Bean Casserole, Corn Soufflé or Ginger Candied Carrots.
- Strawberry/Spinach Salad or Spinach/Pecan.
- Spinach Artichoke Dip or Caramelized Shallot and Blue Cheese Dip.

# Our Wonderful Loft Ridge Community

## Planning to Sell Your Home?

Homes in the Loft Ridge area are still being sold, but there are a few things you can do to make selling your home a great success and turn over quickly. The old three's still apply - PRICE, CONDITION AND LOCATION! Loft Ridge is beautifully located, close-in to almost everything, including two metro's, Interstates 395, 495 and I-95, schools and shopping. The parkland that surrounds it makes it a "paradise."



Several issues in the Northern Virginia in the last couple of years are the number of foreclosures (not here so much), shortage of buyers due to the credit crunch and the short sales that keep coming on the market. We have seen an uptick recently and homes in the range of \$400,000 seem to be in demand. Of course, go back to the big three's when this is considered. You have heard this before -- pricing is critical and the condition bears even heavier. Homes need updating to keep the value up. A new coat of paint, hardwood on the main level, new carpet on the upper level and new kitchens, baths, etc. Look at the rear decks. Have you changed your HVAC, heat pumps, etc.? How do your utility bills look? This is always something potential buyers ask -- "Does the seller have a list of the utilities for the last 6 to 12 months?" Up and down months tell the story of efficiency.

Don't forget curb appeal. What does the potential buyer see when he/she drives up? Is the yard beautifully landscaped, slate replaced, railings painted, etc.? An experienced agent can usually tell from the outside what condition the inside will be in. We make ourselves attractive when we get ready to go out and be seen. Why not make the outside of our most prized possession look the same for people viewing our homes?

Another important item to consider is the staging of your home. We get used to the way we keep our home, but does it stand out in the crowd in the eyes of a purchaser? Putting a lot of effort into a home makes the difference between one where the owner has made little effort. Ask your agent for the name of a stager and see the difference! We need to leave no stone unturned.

You probably have heard about a recent increase in the market. You need to be ready and do everything you can to market your home the way it should be marketed and reach all possible buyers. If you are thinking of selling now, you need to get the house on the market NOW! Houses on the market during the months of November thru January usually are considered more desperate and will bring lower prices. Most buyers are in the market from spring thru mid-October. It is not pleasant to look or buy during the cold months. Of course, there will always be buyers and sellers.

It is amazing how many people some of us meet while walking, that ask about Loft Ridge. Some of the residents from other neighborhoods walk Loft Ridge trails and love it. They ask pricing information and about the woods and talk of the beauty that they did not know existed. We are lucky to have found this tucked away, but close-in neighborhood. Of course, the fabulous people make it a real community. Thank you for helping make ours so fabulous!

## Loft Ridge Real Estate Update (listed between April and August 2009)

Sales		Rentals	
\$350,000	5728 Evergreen Knoll Ct	\$2,100	5747 Ridge View Dr
\$340,000	5716 Evergreen Knoll Ct	\$1,695	5714 Medallion Ct
\$379,500	5729 Evergreen Knoll Ct	\$2,300	5743 Ridge View Drive
	(under contract)	\$1,950	4407 Cheatham Ct
\$449,900	4333 Gingham Ct		(for rent as of July 5)
	(for sale as of May 12)		



Information provided by Metropolitan Regional Information Systems.





## Daylight Savings Time

Turn clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>! For those of you who have trouble remembering which way is which in terms of daylight savings time, just remember this simple phrase: "Spring forward" and "Fall back"!

## Great Deals on Kids Clothes and Toys at Area Consignment Sales!

Every fall, area churches have huge consignment sales on kids clothing, toys, books and baby equipment. You can get great deals on infant and children's clothing, baby layettes, strollers, bikes, cribs, car seats, toys, games, puzzles, art supplies, infant slings, high chairs and much, much more!

- **Moms of Mantua Fall Consignment Sale**  
At the Mantua Swim and Tennis Club, 9330 Pentland Place, Fairfax  
Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **Calvary Road Baptist Church Consignment Sale**  
6811 Beulah St., Alexandria  
Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
For details or to register as a consignor, visit [www.crbc.org/consignment.htm](http://www.crbc.org/consignment.htm)
- **Cameron United Methodists Women's Children Consignment Sale**  
on the corner of Telegraph Rd. and Franconia Rd.  
September 25<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
September 26<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
For more information or to register as a consignor, contact Nancy Owens at [nancy.owens@gsa.gov](mailto:nancy.owens@gsa.gov) or 703-313-0614
- **Annandale United Methodist Church Consignment Sale**  
6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale  
Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
For more information or to register as a consignor, contact Amanda Aguilera at 703-642-2696 or [amandaaguilera1@verizon.net](mailto:amandaaguilera1@verizon.net)



For more information on different consignment sales in NoVA, please visit [www.kidsconsignmentsales.com/va.htm](http://www.kidsconsignmentsales.com/va.htm)

### Contributing Editors

Our special thank you to residents who have helped in the writing and editing of this issue of the Loft Ridge Limelight:

Tom Albert	Grant Davidson
Kevin Johnson	Mary Kelly
Bob Lucas	Luba Mullen
Norma Hughes	Mary Quigley
Virginia Ramsey	Nancy Schoenig
Lisa Staesina	Peggy Thompson

### For Upcoming Events.....

...check [www.loftridge.com](http://www.loftridge.com) As of publication time, the following HOA events have been scheduled:

#### Board Meetings:

Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>  
Mark Twain Middle School

#### ACC Meetings:

Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7:30 pm  
4339 Marjoram Court

#### Communications Committee Meetings:

Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm  
5885 Ridgeview Drive  
Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm  
Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm  
Check website for locations!