



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

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## **Spring Forward**

This issue brings updates and reminders on upcoming Association activities and area events as well as general information that we hope will be of interest to Loft Ridge homeowners and residents. We encourage everyone to consider helping out with various community projects, small and big, and thank tireless volunteers who have been already generously giving their time keeping Loft Ridge a beautiful place to live.

## **Mark Your Calendar For May 25th HOA Annual Meeting**

This is your once-a-year opportunity to join your neighbors and:

- Get an update on events in Loft Ridge
- Meet current Board members
- Meet candidates for Board vacancies
- Express your opinions or concerns and ask questions
- Volunteer for a Committee
- Meet members of the management team

There will also be:

- A budget review
- Election of new Board members
- Updates on HOA projects
- Other items of special importance to homeowners

All are welcome on May 25, 2011. Registration starts at 6:30 p.m. The meeting is scheduled from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Mark Twain Middle School in the Lecture Hall.

An annual meeting packet -- including the agenda, the new budget, specific proposals to be considered, and details on items that require residents' participation -- will be mailed to all Loft Ridge homeowners prior to the meeting.

## **Road Safety Follow-up**

In the Winter 2011 issue of Limelight we talked about an importance of road safety in our community. We would like to share with you efforts to increase safety on our area roads continue.

On March 16, 2011 Supervisor McKay, Delegate Sickles and Senator Barker will convene a meeting for VDOT to present the results of their Franconia Road and Cannon Lane study to the community. The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at Clermont Elementary School.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please call the office of Supervisor Jeffrey C. McKay at 703-971-6262.

# 2011 HOA Annual Spring Inspections

Loft Ridge home inspection time is right around the corner. If you are planning any repairs to the exterior of your home, finishing them by the end of March will ensure your readiness when the ACC begins home inspections on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The HOA Homeowner Handbook has recently undergone some revisions. For homeowners thinking about improvements it never hurts to re-read that relevant portion of the handbook to make sure your plans comply with HOA rules.

Tips to consider if you are planning work:

- If you are planning on painting, remember that the color schemes are based on McCormick brand paint. Take a minute to look up your home's color scheme on [www.loftridge.com](http://www.loftridge.com) or contact Melissa Wolynec with Sequoia Management at 703-803-9641. Homes with painted front porches should also double check the four allowed colors with management if unsure of their appropriate color.
- Cleaning that fence or deck? If you plan on sealing the wood remember that there are seven different semi-transparent stains allowed for decks (which can be referenced online). Fences can ONLY be sealed with clear preservative.
- Take a minute to look around your property. Did leaves or debris pile up over the winter? Are there any items or objects in your yard that need to be removed? The decorative objects and landscaping sections of the handbook will help you determine if something doesn't belong.
- Thinking about changing that front door or adding/updating a storm door? Protect your choice by submitting a request for approval form through the ACC.
- Planning a change to the exterior of your home? Double check the Handbook to see if you need approval for that project.
- Just because you see it on your neighbors house doesn't mean that they are in compliance...when in doubt contact the ACC or management for the correct answer.
- Please contact Sequoia Management at 703-803-9641 or [management@loftridge.com](mailto:management@loftridge.com) whenever you have corrected a violation.

## Can We Talk Trash?

Unfortunately, we all have it. Fortunately, we have a reasonable way of dealing with it.

Please remember that the County picks up regular trash once a week on Wednesday morning. It is our HOA policy that trash and recycle bins are to be put out only after 5 p.m. on Tuesday night and to be picked up the next day by the evening.

Trash should be put out in front of your house or areas that the neighbors generally use as collection points to facilitate pick up. It is equally inappropriate to put your trash in front of another neighbor's house.

Please don't put your trash out early and do not put it where it does not belong.

The county has special collections for household items that are too large to collect with a standard truck. Special collections must be scheduled ahead of time by calling 703-802-3322. For more specific details, check the Fairfax County website.



## Calling All Volunteers!

Be a part of what happens in your neighborhood. The goal of any HOA is the preservation of property values. It does this through a formal group – the Board of Directors – by maintaining common areas, administering architectural guidelines and handling everyday association business. Offer your services - join the Loft Ridge Board!

It doesn't matter if you've never served on a Board, it is not a full-time position and no special skills are required other than your desire to maintain a vibrant community that people enjoy being part of. Board members are homeowners just like you. A varied group of volunteers, they make an effort to understand community needs, review the details presented once a month, and then vote the way they think benefits the community the best.

For details on the nominating process, go to and click on Nominating Committee listed on the left hand side at <http://www.loftridge.com> or contact the nominating committee chair, Bob Lucas at 703-329-8684 or [vicepresident@loftridge.com](mailto:vicepresident@loftridge.com).

If the board option is not something you are interested in – consider being part of one of the association committees. Please consider making time in your life for this important, volunteer, community function. You will be warmly welcomed.

## 4th Annual Loft Ridge Easter Egg Hunt

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the Tennis Courts**

**Rain Date: Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.**

The Loft Ridge Moms' Group invites the entire community to attend this fun activity, whether you have kids or are a kid at heart.

There will be a toddler hunt area for kids zero to three years or at parent's discretion, and a big kid's hunt area for the older kids.

This year we will try to focus on being eco-friendly, thus there will be no flyers at your doorsteps to remind you of this event. So, mark your calendars now!

The food provided will center on breakfast item foods, i.e., doughnuts, muffins, breakfast casseroles, fruit, juice boxes, and coffee/tea for adults.

Anyone interested in organizing games or crafts for the kids or donating food items, is encouraged to get in touch with the event organizer, Melissa Perreira at [melissaperreira@yahoo.com](mailto:melissaperreira@yahoo.com).

## Oh, Rats!

In Fairfax County, the rodents that people most commonly encounter are rats and mice. These rodents burrow, jump, climb and can squeeze through very small spaces. Rats can squeeze through an opening the size of a quarter. Mice can squeeze through an opening the size of a dime.

Rats and mice not only leave urine and fecal droppings wherever they go, they can gnaw through wires in your home which could cause a fire. They also reproduce at a rapid rate and nest up to 150 feet from their food supply. We all need to do our part to help avoid attracting these rodents.

Here are some tips on how to rodent proof your home and avoid attracting these rodents to our homes and community:

- **Eliminate their food source**--secure your trash and make sure it is kept in trash containers.
- **Close off gaps** under doors, cracks in foundations, and crawl space doors and vents without screens by using a strong and durable sealant. Steel wool is also a good way to prevent rodents from entering through vents.
- **Do not hang bird feeders** as the seeds that are dropped by the birds are a favorite source of food for mice and rats.
- **Do not feed your** pets outside.
- **Do not leave food** out for stray and wild animals on or near your property.
- **Keep your grass mowed**, as mice like to bury in the grass and eat grass seed.
- **Call the Health Department** at 703-246-2300 when you see a rat or someone setting food out for stray animals.



If these rodents do gain access to your home, the Fairfax County Health Department has information on how to eliminate them yourself or you may choose to hire a licensed pest management professional to help you. For more information, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/hdpdf/rats.pdf> or call 703-246-2300 to arrange a rodent inspection of your home or yard.

*--Extracted from the Fairfax County Health Department web page on rodent control*

## “This Old Townhouse” Article Series

We are pleased to continue our “This Old Townhouse” feature that gives Loft Ridge residents an opportunity to show others in the community repairs and remodeling that they have done in their townhomes and provide construction details for those interested in undertaking similar projects in their homes. In this issue, we discuss how to make a master bathroom larger.

### Townhouse model:

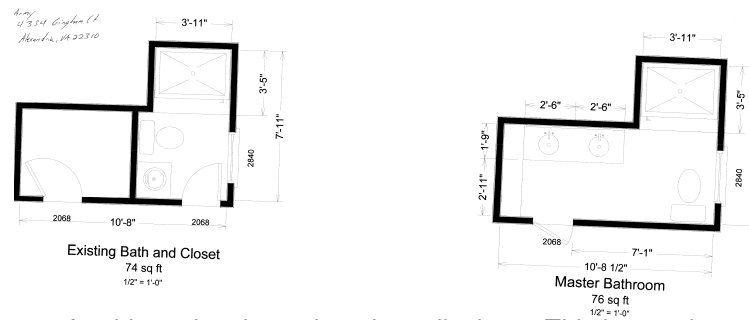
Berkeley end unit

### The Problem:

Master bathroom is too small.

### The Repair:

Utilize space from walk-in closet to make bathroom larger. See a before and after sketch below:



### Materials needed:

The materials necessary for this project is too lengthy to list here. This is a major remodel project.

### Cost:

Depends on how much you spend on materials (e.g. tile, vanity, sinks, faucets, etc.). You can save money by keeping your shower stall the same and not retiling it. The cost to move the plumbing around was approximately \$4,000. The cost for tile installation and new fixtures was \$3,000. The homeowner did the rest of the work.

### What if your neighbors want more information, may they contact you?

Yes, you may contact Patrick Staresina at [patrickstare@verizon.net](mailto:patrickstare@verizon.net).

Do you have a home repair or remodel that you would like to share with your neighbors? Have you redone your closets? Replaced doors? Reconfigured kitchen cabinets? It doesn't have to be a big repair or a fancy remodel, you just have to be willing to share it. If so, contact Luba Mullen at 571-218-9882 or [comChair@lofttridg.com](mailto:comChair@lofttridg.com).

***Your neighbors would love to hear about it!***

## What else can you do to protect our local streams and the Chesapeake Bay?

Volunteer to work on a storm drain labeling project.

Storm drains prevent the flooding of roads and neighborhoods by carrying rain and snowmelt away from streets and sidewalks. Unlike water from our taps and tubs, water flowing into storm drains is not treated. Storm drains connect directly to our streams. Trash, pet waste, motor oil, paint and other materials dumped or washed into storm drains pollute local streams, the Potomac River, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Labels on storm drains help remind all of us to keep storm drains and our streams clean.



If you are interested in helping on a Fairfax County-sponsored project to label storm drains in Loft Ridge, please contact Mary Kelly at 703-960-7873 or [surfblueslug@yahoo.com](mailto:surfblueslug@yahoo.com). With the Board approval at the February 23 meeting and pending the county approval, the project would take place this summer. The County will provide all materials, and volunteers will mark storm drains with the label shown on the left. Groups will use pre-printed plastic markers and adhesive to label the storm drains.

You can also help out by reporting any storm drain dumping of hazardous chemicals like pesticides, paint, motor oil, etc. to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue at 703-691-2131 or the Health Department at 703-246-2300.

# Go Native!

As you consider your garden options this spring, keep in mind the option of “going native” by “naturescaping” your garden instead. Many of the most common landscaping choices (such as English ivy, day lilies, vinca, begonia, impatiens) offer us beautiful variety, but aren’t native to our area. So why consider alternatives? Below are just a few of the reasons.

- **Save money.** When you introduce plants native to the Virginia area and properly chosen for your garden type (shade or sun, wet or dry), you’re letting nature do what it does best – thrive on its own. Your garden will require less irrigation and fewer chemicals to keep your plants healthy, which translates to money in your pocket.
- **Preserve bio-diversity.** With suburban landscapes making up the majority of the metropolitan DC area, healthy ecosystems start with what’s in our garden. In the eyes of wildlife, exotics are often no better than a barren desert: bugs and insects haven’t been able to evolve to convert the plant matter into nutrients, which means less food for animals in the middle of food chain, such as birds, and so on. Overall bio-diversity skyrockets with every native added, helping to restore an intended natural balance.
- **Attract more butterflies.** Butterflies are nature’s eye-candy and extremely hard working pollinators. Planting the right combination of natives can attract an amazing array of butterflies. For the especially keen, you can easily play host to the miracle of an entire life butterfly life cycle with the proper plants (monarch caterpillars only eat plants in the milkweed family, black swallowtails readily take to parsley and rue). Add a mesh butterfly house and you can watch the magical metamorphosis take place right in your own garden.

## Where to get more information on natives:

**Starting point:** Here’s a short list of some of our easiest and most beautiful natives: Cardinal flowers, Columbine, Bee Balm, Butterfly Weed, and Joe Pye Weed (and don’t let the word “weed” scare you away!)

**Connect:** Join your neighbors on the Loft Ridge Garden group to connect about gardening (natives and non-natives) and share seeds and plants: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/loftridge-garden>

**Plan ahead:** Parkfairfax Native Plant Sale (the biggest in our area, held every April and September)

3601 Valley Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302

<http://home.earthlink.net/~sknudsen>

Look for other native plant sales held throughout the year at various local parks such as Green Springs Garden, Huntley Meadows, and Long Branch Nature Center.

**Visit and shop:** Nature By Design

Just off of Route 1 @ 300 Calvert Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

703-683-GROW (4769)

<http://www.nature-by-design.com>

Don’t forget to ask your favorite local nurseries if they carry native plants. You might be surprised!

**Read:** Bringing Nature Home, by Douglas Tallamy, is a great starting point for anyone new to native gardening: <http://bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/gardening-for-life>

## What To Do When It Rains?

Here is a cool idea for a fun activity on one of those rainy spring days –

Listen to an audio book for free!

With a goal to record every book in the public domain, LibriVox at <http://librivox.org> offers an extensive collection of free audio books read by volunteers.

## Loft Ridge Yard Sales

Spring is coming and with it the urge to de-clutter and hold yard sales. Here are a few reminders:

- Yard sale designated area is by the tennis courts.
- There should be at least 5 participants.
- Get the Board approval at least 3 weeks prior.
- Designate a person in charge of the event and cleanup.

More details are in the HOA Homeowners Handbook.

## One Tank Trip: Weird Baltimore!

We continue another (hopefully) regularly-appearing feature – the “One Tank Trip.” When director John Waters proposed that his city’s motto should be “Come to Baltimore and Be Shocked,” he was dead serious. Baltimore is home to beehive beauty contests, macabre museums and a whole variety of offbeat adventure, from the spectacular to the spectacle!

Where: Baltimore, MD

Distance: 43 miles (approximately 45 minutes)

Weird and wacky things to do and see:

The subversive art scene’s crown jewel is the **American Visionary Art Museum** (\$14 for adults; \$10 for seniors; \$8 for children over 4, and free admission for children 4 and under; 410-244-1900; [www.avam.org](http://www.avam.org)), which shows work by self-taught, psychotic or often times compulsive artists.

If you haven’t reached your weirdness quotient yet, check out **Atomic Books** (410-662-4444; [www.atomicbooks.com](http://www.atomicbooks.com)), which, amongst other things, carries the latest issue of “Cinema Sewer,” a field guide to the shopping carts of eastern North America and many other unprintable titles. The store’s motto is “Literary Finds for Mutated Minds.”

One of the best known transient attractions in Baltimore is the annual **Honfest** (June 11-12, 2011; [www.honfest.net](http://www.honfest.net)) that is named after the local greeting, “hon”, derived from the phrase “honey.” One of the event’s main highlights, which draws in over 20,000 people annually, is the Bawlmer’s Best Hon Contest, where the woman who best epitomizes the 1960s “hon” - with the largest beehive hairdo, bluest eye-shadow and tightest spandex pants - walks away with a \$2,000 shopping spree. Intrigued? Grab your wig and fill up your car tank!

Baltimoreans don’t limit the costumes to humans, but bedazzle just about anything. The **Kinetic Sculpture Race** (May 7, 2011; <http://www.kineticbaltimore.com>) features kinetic sculptures from across the eastern US and convenes at the American Visionary Art Museum. Participants spend weeks creating people-powered sculptures in all shapes and colors and then compete to see who built the best (or weirdest).

***Do you have a one-tank trip you would like to share? It doesn’t have to be fancy or exotic, you just have to be willing to share it. If so, contact Luba Mullen at [comChair@lofridge.com](mailto:comChair@lofridge.com).***

***Your neighbors would love to hear about it!***

## Have You Heard What Geoff San Antonio Is Into? – Amateur (Ham) Radio

While nearly everyone today utilizes wireless communication in the form of a cellular phone, amateur radio is the original form of wireless communication. Amateur radio is both a hobby and a service. “Hams,” as amateur radio enthusiasts are called, use various forms of electronic radio equipment to communicate with each other for a myriad of purposes. Hams are everywhere. With the right radio equipment, it is possible to talk to other hams half way around the world. In addition to some really cool radio equipment, amateur radio is a great way to meet people.

It’s never been easier to get started in amateur radio. Gone are days when Morse Code (dit’s and da’s) was a requirement. In fact, all licensing levels can be achieved without knowing Morse Code. The best way to get started is through one of the local amateur radio clubs. Two in the area are: The Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club ([www.mvarc.org](http://www.mvarc.org)) and the Alexandria Radio Club ([www.w4HFH.org](http://www.w4HFH.org)). Both clubs offer licensing tests once a month in addition to holding club meetings and club events.

A great way to get you feet wet in the hobby is to attend a Field Day event. This event occurs the forth full weekend in June every year (June 25-26, 2011). Most radio clubs will organize an outing and try and make as many radio contacts as possible in 48 hours. It’s a great way to see what all the fuss is about. Further information about amateur radio can be found at the Amateur Radio Relay League website ([www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)). It is the national association for amateur radio within the United States.

## Lee RECenter Improvements To Open Memorial Day Weekend!

If you've been anxious to see the result of all of the construction outside the Lee RECenter over the past year, your wait will end soon – well, at least half of your wait will end. Phase I of the Lee RECenter family area improvements project will open to the public this Memorial Day weekend.

In April 2010, the County began several major improvements to the picnic area outside the Lee RECenter. In addition to repairing pre-existing structures, new, fully-accessible structures, such as a treehouse and water “spray ground,” have been added. The project is being funded through the County and the Joey Pizzano Memorial Foundation, which provides grants to local governments to build or improve access to play areas for children with disabilities. The Joey Pizzano Memorial Foundation is probably most notable in this area for its work on the Clemonjoyntri playground, another joint project with the County.

The tree house and spray ground are set to open on May 30th. Both will be completely ADA-accessible (wheelchairs, etc.). The “Our Special Harbor” spray ground will be zero water depth but have lots of water spraying around from various overhead and ground-level spouts and fountains. The spray park will have a harbor theme, with a boat and other water features. The “Forever Young Treehouse” will overlook the 79 acre forest that slopes down to the stream valley below. There will be no admission charge for individuals and families for either area . . . yes, you read it right – it's FREE! (There may be a charge for groups such as school, camps, etc. That is to be determined. )

The second phase of the improvement project will include a picnic area, an ADA-accessible playground, and an ADA-accessible carousel. Funding is being raised now for those projects through the Fairfax County Park Foundation at <http://www.fxparcs.org> and the Joey Pizzano Memorial Foundation at <http://www.jpmpf.org>. Your contribution will be deeply appreciated.

## Thinking about Literacy and Early Childhood

The Loft Ridge community is home to many families with young children. Every parent wants their child to thrive in school and we often hear discussions among moms and dads about how to nurture the children's learning.

One very good site with useful information for parents is the publicly funded Reading Rockets at <http://www.readingrockets.org>. This site provides well researched and current information for parents and educators on a variety of topics related to reading and literacy.

Parents may find the section on “Launching Young Readers” of interest. This page gives many useful suggestions on ways that parents and early childhood educators can promote communication and literacy skills.

The following is a brief listing of helpful links on Reading Rockets:

- Building literacy skills at home - <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/20035>
- Developmental milestones <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/c74/>
- Toddling Toward Reading - <http://www.readingrockets.org/shows/launching/toddling>
- Get Ready to Read screening <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/32376>
- Finding a high-quality preschool <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/26100>
- Is my child ready for kindergarten? <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/23153>
- More on early literacy [http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/early\\_literacy\\_development](http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/early_literacy_development)
- More on preschool and childcare [http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/preschool\\_child\\_care](http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/preschool_child_care)



## Mark your Calendar!



The Loft Ridge  
Annual National Night-Out  
and BBQ  
returns in August!

All interested in helping out with the planning, set up or clean up or those who would like to donate food or materials, please contact the Board at [board@lofridge.com](mailto:board@lofridge.com)

## Meet A New Board Member

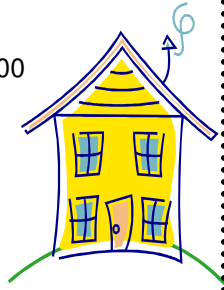
Carter Mullen was selected in the January special Board meeting as the new Board member, replacing Damon Blanton who stepped down. Mr. Mullen and his family have been residents of the Loft Ridge community for five years. He has been a member of the communications committee, helped organize the National Night-Out and Barbeque for the last two years and is usually the one flipping burgers on the grill for the event. Carter works as an environmental scientist for the Navy Research Laboratory and is looking forward to serving on the Board for the betterment of the entire community.

### Loft Ridge Real Estate Update

(November 2010 – January 2011)

#### Rented

- Marjoram Court (Berkeley model) - \$2,100
- Gingham Court (Custis model) - \$1,995
- Gypsy Court (Custis model) - \$2,100
- Marjoram Court (Custis model) - \$1,990



*Information provided by  
Metropolitan Regional Information Systems.*

### Daylight Saving Time

Spring forward! Daylight saving time begins Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> this year.



*Turn clocks ahead one hour  
before you go to bed on  
Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.*

Do not think of the hour of sleep you'll lose, but rather of extra hour of sunlight you'll enjoy from here into November!

### Contributing Editors

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

Nicolette Couch	Carter and Luba Mullen
David Fallert	Carie Rothenbacher
Renee Grebe	Geoff San Antonio
Norma Hughes	Lisa Staresina
Mary Kelly	Peggy Thompson
Bob Lucas	Erika Wheeler

### For Upcoming Events...

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

#### **Board Meetings:**

- Wednesday, March 23, 7:30 pm
- Wednesday, April 27, 7:30 pm
- Wednesday, May 18, 7:30 pm

#### **Annual Meeting:**

- Wednesday, May 25, 7:30 pm
- Lecture Hall at Mark Twain Middle School

#### **ACC Meetings:**

- Wednesday, March 9, 7:30 pm  
5727 Evergreen Knoll Court
- Wednesday, April 13, 7:30 pm  
4334 Gingham Court
- Wednesday, May 11, 7:30 pm  
5706 Medallion Court

#### **Communications Committee Meetings:**

- Tuesday, March 8, 7:30 pm  
4406 Churchman Court
- Tuesday, April 12, 7:30 pm  
5775 Ridge View Drive