

# LOFT RIDGE LIMELIGHT



Loft Ridge Home Owners Association • Alexandria, VA • [www.loftridge.com](http://www.loftridge.com)

## Loft Ridge Projects Update

In late September, a walk-through of the community was performed to identify dead and or damaged trees or trees in need of pruning. After competitively bidding the project to 4 companies, a vendor was selected and the work will be completed by early January. The next round of tree pruning and removals will take place in Spring 2013. A handful of new trees have been purchased, at a discounted price, and will be installed in areas where trees were lost due to disease or damage. The installation of these trees will be completed in early January. However, the Board maintains an ongoing list of trees needing care, so if you're aware of any dead trees or damaged limbs on common area trees, please email the Board at [board@loftridge.com](mailto:board@loftridge.com).

In Fall 2012, the Board commissioned an update to the Association Reserve Study. This was partly due to the extreme weather experienced over the last 3 to 4 years (blizzards, hurricanes, derechos), and partly to assess whether the funding strategy implemented after the last update put the Association at risk. The study included a detailed inspection of the Association's assets, including the various structures (curbs, sidewalks, streets) and features (tot lots, tennis courts). As part of the update, a review was made of the funds currently allocated to pay for upkeep or replacement of HOA assets, and a forecast was made as to whether the Association has been setting aside enough to pay for the potential

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future projects. A draft of the study was returned and reviewed at the January meeting.

The Study shows good news! Over the last 2-3 years, we have been aggressive in our reserve saving in an attempt to correct underfunding before that time, and the study outlines how the Association is now in good position to be fully funded for all forecasted projects over the next 20 years.

In other news, the management, grounds, and snow removal contracts have also been reviewed and approved. As has been the practice in prior years, sanding will occur if there the temperature falls below freezing and ice is in the forecast. Plows will be called when snow accumulates to 3 or more inches. Please remember that homeowners are responsible for shoveling the sidewalk in front of their property. This ensures safe walking conditions for all pedestrians.

The Board is also currently reviewing the Association's collection policy, and plans to review the HOA Handbook this year.

## Winter Wonderland!

- ✳ **National Museum of Natural History** – Enjoy watching the kids explore the artifacts of dinosaurs, and other fascinating creatures. Check out the Discovery Room and find a fun place for young children to enjoy hands on activities with nature.
- ✳ **National Air & Space Museum** – Who wouldn't love to see this huge collection of air and spacecraft? Learn about the history, science, and technology of aviation and space flight and watch one of the amazing IMAX films.
- ✳ **National Children's Museum** – This brand new museum located at National Harbor provides hands-on exhibits and activities that are sure to interest children of all ages. There is a theatre

and a Center for Learning and Innovation. And the good news is that it's just across the river.

- ✳ **Discovery Theater** – This is a Smithsonian's Theater for children that is located in the Ripley Center on the National Mall in Washington, DC. It is fun for school-age children and features stories and folktales are told through puppet shows, storytellers, dancers, actors, musicians, and mimes. Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Learn about these and many other activities at:  
<http://dc.about.com/od/childrensactivities/tp/15BestforKids.htm>.

## Real Estate Update

Under Contract	List Price	
5733 Evergreen Knoll Ct.	\$390,00	
Sold	Sold Price	Subsidy*
4331 Marjoram Ct.	\$435,910	\$0
4320 Caprice Ct.	\$343,000	\$9,000
4309 Gypsy Ct.	\$395,000	\$0
5706 Ridge View Drive	\$399,000	\$11,765
5729 Evergreen Knoll Ct.	\$391,000	\$0
5706 Gladden Ct	\$359,500	\$5,000
5753 Ridge View Dr.	\$390,000	\$0
5712 Evergreen Knoll Ct.	\$346,300	\$0

\* "Seller Subsidy" = total seller contributed to buyer's closing cost.

*"It's tangible, it's solid, it's beautiful, it's artistic, from my standpoint, and I just love real estate."*

– Donald Trump

Rentals	Rental Rate
5668 Ridge View Dr.	\$1,950
5714 Lofthill Ct.	\$1,850
4319 Gingham Ct.	\$2,100
5716 Ridge View Dr.	\$1,975
5625 Ridge View Dr.	\$1,995
4331 Gingham Ct.	\$1,995
4322 Gingham Ct.	\$2,145



## Did you know we have a mystery writer in Loft Ridge?

### *Tell us about yourself and your writing.*

My name is Matthew Iden, and I have been a resident of Loft Ridge since 2002. I'm a self-published crime novelist; I also write fantasy, science fiction, horror, and literary fiction. I'm a former web designer and IT consultant.

### *How did you get started as an author?*

I've always had an interest in writing, but both a bachelor's and master's degree in English Literature guaranteed that, for years, I didn't believe anything I wrote was good enough for publication. As a result, I stopped writing altogether instead of doing what I should've, which is keep plugging away until I got better.

About ten years ago, I realized no one was going to hand me a publishing contract and I started writing in earnest. After many false starts, I finished my first crime fiction caper, *The Road to Sturgis*, in just two years! Unfortunately, I soon discovered that writing the novel was the easy part.

### *If writing is the "easy part," what's the hard part?*

Fiction publishing is a fickle industry that can be extremely difficult to break into. I studied the industry and the market for a year, trying to understand what made it tick. This saved me from making mistakes, but it also clued me in to the biases and restrictions that the publishing business possesses (and imposes on itself).

After seeking agent representation for several years--ultimately fruitless--and as the prospects of landing a contract started to dim, I looked into self-publishing through

Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing program. I liked what I saw, went "all in" almost a year ago, and couldn't be happier. I'm slowly building up a fan base for my writing and have created dozens of amazing relationships through the process.

### *So, what's the worst thing about being a writer?*

Writing isn't engineering or math. There's no objective measuring stick to tell you when you've done well. Some people love my work, some people (including myself, sometimes) hate it. Being a writer--especially an independent writer--means that you have to be schizophrenic: believing you're the best thing to happen to literature since Shakespeare, while simultaneously holding yourself to such an incredibly high standard that you feel like you've failed.

### *And, what's the best thing about being a writer?*

I'm forging a career out of a passion instead of working at a job. I own my successes and failures. Not being bound to a contract to a publishing house means I have the artistic freedom to write what I want, when I want.

### *What are you working on now?*

I have a dozen short story collections, novellas, and novels available through all the major distributors: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, iBooks, and Smashwords. My "flagship" project is a crime thriller series about retired Washington, DC homicide detective Marty Singer, available in the novels *A Reason to Live* and *Blueblood*. I just finished the draft of *Signs*, the third book in the series, and have three smaller projects in process.

*Continued on next page.*



## Matt Iden: Loft Ridge Mystery Writer (continued from previous page)

**Do you have any advice for would-be writers?**

Writing is more difficult than most people realize. If you're just starting out, you're probably not as good as you think. But that's where everyone starts and it simply means you have to work at your craft. You need to commune with other writers, study the art, and—most importantly—actually write. Don't talk about it, don't daydream about publishing contracts or movie deals, don't just read books about it—sit down and do it!

To learn more about becoming an author or about Matt's work, drop him a line at

[matt.iden@matthew-iden.com](mailto:matt.iden@matthew-iden.com) or take a peek at his blog: <http://matthew-iden.com>. There, you'll find links to his books, excerpts, and a lot of talk about the writing craft. Matt indicates that "[u]nfortunately, I can't read unsolicited manuscripts or writing, but I'm happy to share my experiences and give advice on the craft and state of the industry."

*Q. How many mystery writers does it take to screw in a light bulb?*

*A. Two. One to screw it almost all the way in, and another to give it a good twist at the end.*

## It's Snow Removal Time Again!

This is just a friendly reminder that homeowners are required to remove both snow and ice from the sidewalk that abuts their property. Please help keep our sidewalks free of snow and ice so residents can get to school and the bus stops safely. Please assist the elderly, disabled or other individuals living near you who are unable to safely shovel their own walk.

If you chose to apply a deicing product, please do not use salts such as calcium, potassium, sodium chloride or ammonium sulfate/nitrate. Products such as Halite, RockSalt and IceFighter are harmful to concrete and to the environment. Products such as Soft Thaw are effective and better for concrete and safer for the environment, as are clean sand and non-clumping clean kitty litter.

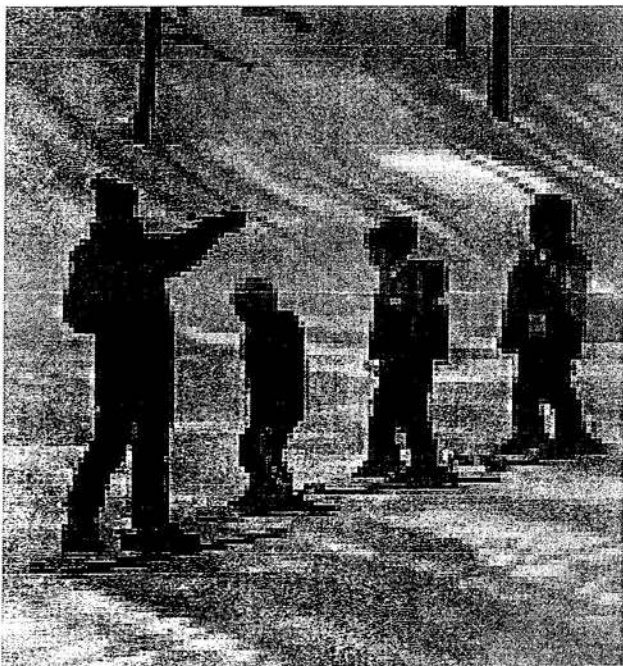
While the Association has an established plan to plow our streets, it does not include plowing individual parking spaces. Please be considerate when removing snow from parking spaces. Do not pile snow in the streets or on sidewalks in a manner that blocks or impedes traffic flow. This is not only important for regular travel in and out of the community, but an absolute necessity for emergency vehicles.



## One Tank Trip: Massanutten Resort

Located approximately 10 miles east of Harrisonburg, VA, in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Massanutten Resort is a wonderful, scenic, family-friendly destination year-round. The main resort is a time-share community which offers plenty of daily or weekly rentals for non-owners at a variety of unit sizes and rates.

In summer, the premier attractions are miles of hiking trails, championship golf courses, horseback riding, swimming, tennis, dry land tubing, and the fantastic and huge new Indoor/Outdoor Water Park! In winter, there are miles of ski trails, snow sports, an excellent ski school, ice skating, and the Indoor portion of the water park to enjoy.



*Massanutten provides good times and happy memories regardless of the season!*

Because it is a year-round resort, Massanutten offers numerous, high-quality activities and services for visitors, including restaurants, a beautiful full-service spa, a number of full-facility fitness centers, and a full roster of children's and adult activities.

An easy ten minute drive away is the warm and welcoming Valley town of Harrisonburg, home to one of the state's best universities—James Madison. In Harrisonburg, you will find a thriving music

*"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity..."*

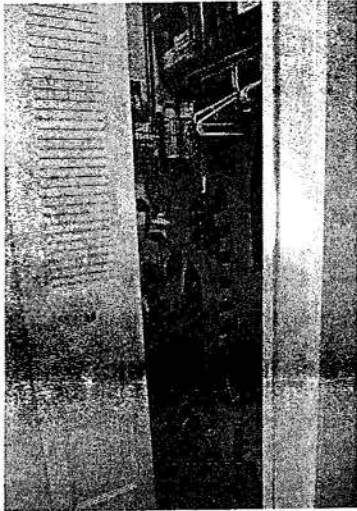
*— John Muir*

and café scene, good restaurants to appeal to everyone from locavores to steak-and-potatoes types, a number of lovely and diverse art galleries, and lots of fun shopping. Further up the road is Luray Caverns, a magnificent, not-to-be-missed natural wonder.

For more information, visit Massanutten Resort online at [www.massresort.com](http://www.massresort.com). Or contact Loftridge resident Amy Talbot at [amylizabethtalbot@yahoo.com](mailto:amylizabethtalbot@yahoo.com) for more info. Our family of five, along with our grandparents and adult friends without children, have vacationed there numerous times in all seasons and can share more details

## This Old Townhouse

Looking for more storage space? Look up, look down, it's all around. Useable storage space is often available in unused areas in closets and cabinets. Here are some tips for maximizing the space in your townhouse.

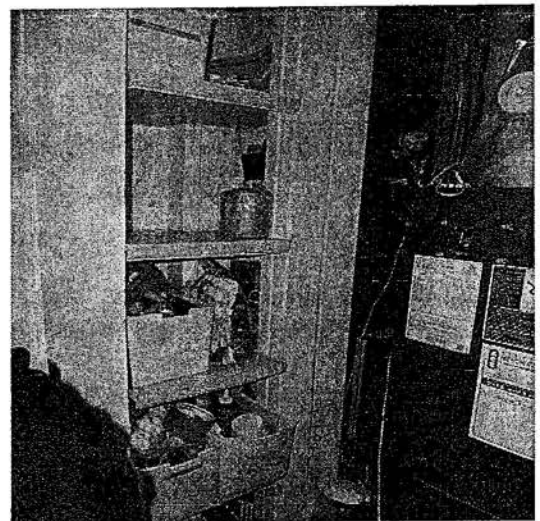


### Storage Challenge #1 – The Front Hall Closet

Think vertically. Wall-mounted baskets with a narrow profile can be used to store shoes, outdoor pet supplies, bug spray – you name it. These baskets free up floor space without eliminating outerwear storage space. Labeled bins up top also provide easy-access storage. (Baskets from The Container Store.)

### Storage Challenge #2 – The Utility Closet

This owner made a template of an odd nook in her utility closet, constructed shelves from inexpensive plywood, and gained roughly 1' x 1.5' x 7' of storage – just enough to hold most of her craft supplies. Crafting tools too large to fit in the shelves hang neatly from wall-mounted hooks.

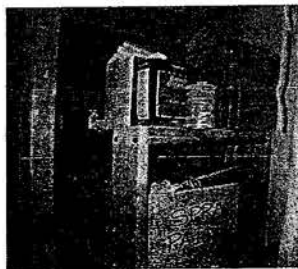
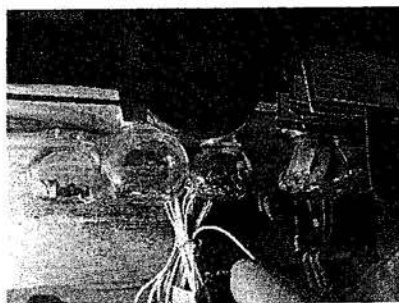


### Storage Challenge #3–Understairs Waterheater Closet

Inexpensive pegboard and shelves (assembled inside the closet) allow for organized and visible storage.

Screw-cap glass jars glued to the underside of stair treads provide easy

access to fasteners, without taking up shelf space. Note: Screw-cap jars work better than baby food jars (GORM shelving and RAJTAN spice jars from IKEA, 4/\$3; Gorilla Glue and peg board from Lowes.)





# » Small Town News «

## Kudos on 2012 Halloween Parade & Ghoulympics!

Thank you to *all* those who organized; ran the contests; brought food, drinks, candy & prizes; set up; took down; and just generally made this year's parade a huge success!

Kudos to these folks, who went the extra mile:

Janelle Abeles  
Maria Teresa Baldo  
Teresa Bearden  
Karen Fosse  
Jonathan Heisey-Grove  
Janna Jantz  
Mary Kelly  
Kim Lundberg  
Bob Lucas  
Christina Bieschke Lyster  
Melissa Perriera  
Mary Quigley  
Ginny Ramsey  
Debra Rate  
Lisa Staesina  
January Tkach  
Erika Wheeler

## Area Kids Win Big at 2012 Ghoulympics

Local athletes and junior craftspeople displayed amazing prowess and skill at the first -- of what we hope to be many -- Ghoulympics. Here are a few of the winners:

*First Place Winner – Broom Race (4 and under):*

*First Place Winner – Broom Race (5 and up):*  
Cam Hunt

*First Place Winner – Broom Decorating:*  
Jeb Hunt

*First Place Winner – Sack Race (4 and under):*  
Jayce Bearden

*First Place Winner – Sack Race (5 and up):*  
Jack Kelly

All first place winners received a trophy and a gift card to Dairy Queen!



*from the Limelight Staff!*

Congratulations to Dawn, Jonathan, and Egan Heisey-Grove on the birth of baby Zane, who was delivered by his parents in the front seat of their car, just outside the doors of the hospital emergency room!!



## LOFT RIDGE BOARD

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## UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE EVENTS

### Future Board Meetings:

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

at 7:30 p.m.

Mark Twain Middle School Lecture Hall

### Future ACC Meetings:

Wednesday, February 14, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

at 4334 Gingham Ct.

### Future Communications Meetings:

TBA

For more information, please go to [www.loftridge.com](http://www.loftridge.com)



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