



### Loft Ridge Board [board@loftridge.com](mailto:board@loftridge.com)

President  
Erika Wheeler  
703-329-0642  
[president@loftridge.com](mailto:president@loftridge.com)

Vice President  
Bob Lucas  
703-329-8684  
[vicepresident@loftridge.com](mailto:vicepresident@loftridge.com)

Secretary  
Carter Mullen  
571-218-9881  
[secretary@loftridge.com](mailto:secretary@loftridge.com)

Treasurer  
Kevin Johnson  
703-960-5810  
[treasurer@loftridge.com](mailto:treasurer@loftridge.com)

ACC Liaison  
Lisa Staesina  
703-960-7267  
[accliaison@loftridge.com](mailto:accliaison@loftridge.com)

Members-at-Large:  
Mary Quigley  
703-960-0426  
[msquig@verizon.net](mailto:msquig@verizon.net)

Nancy Schoenig  
703-960-0658  
[nschoenig@cox.net](mailto:nschoenig@cox.net)

Sequoia Management  
703-803-9641  
[management@loftridge.com](mailto:management@loftridge.com)

### Limelight Staff

Communications Chair  
Mary Kelly  
703-960-7873  
[comChair@loftridge.com](mailto:comChair@loftridge.com)

Editors:  
Grant Davidson  
Norma Hughes  
Bob Lucas  
Carrie Rothenbacher  
Peggy Thompson  
Special Contributors:

Marie Danco  
Hannah Phillips  
Michelle Schafer

## A Happy New Year to You!

Rather than jumping right into HOA matters, we begin this issue by wishing everyone a very happy holiday season, and that the upcoming year is filled with health and happiness. As we approach the New Year, we thought that you might enjoy learning about a few fun traditions from faraway lands and maybe introduce them into your New Year's celebrations!

Greece and England share an interesting holiday food tradition that couples as both a choking hazard and a dental nightmare. A coin is hidden in a festive cake both for *Vassilopita*, Greece's New Year, and in Britain's traditional Christmas pudding. The one who finds the coin and retrieves it before swallowing it, choking, or chipping a tooth will enjoy success and wealth in the coming year. In Tibet, however, the opposite is true. Tibetans hide a piece of coal in their *guthok* for Buddhist New Year. The person who gets the coal is said to have a dark soul and an evil heart!

Lunar New Year is one of the most festive holidays celebrated in many Asian cultures and typically lasts several days. In China, the celebration is a time for "sticky rice with pork" made into the shapes of squares or rolled into balls, and Moon cakes are the most popular desserts. In Vietnam, these cakes are called *banh trung thu*, and are typically filled with savory meats, sweet coconut, or bean paste. In the Philippines, celebrators eat noodles for a long life, and round food items to symbolize coins in hopes of gaining money and success. Korea's Winter Solstice is the time for *dduk*, a glutinous rice cake served as dessert with fruit and nuts inside.

In Mexico, tamales are the traditional holiday food. In Guatemala, these tamales negros, or "black tamales," are sweet and eaten at midnight on Christmas Eve. Cooking and baking breads is traditionally part of Ethiopian celebrations during this time of the year. *Doro wat*, a spicy chicken stew, is the special holiday treat in Ethiopia, eaten with traditional Ethiopian bread, *injera*.

One Italian tradition that has made its way into Spanish and Filipino cultures is eating grapes when the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve. The Spanish and Filipino traditions suggest twelve grapes for the twelve months of the upcoming year. Italian tradition suggests eating as many grapes as you can – the more grapes, the more upcoming success!

Beans and eggs are a common feature of New Year's feasts throughout the world, as they symbolize rebirth and life. Here in the U.S., this tradition manifests itself in the "hoppin' John" dish favored by Southern revelers. German immigrants favor pork dishes, which are believed to portend a prosperous New Year, and eschew chicken dishes, which promise lean times in the future.

We hope you enjoyed this article. No matter what your holiday traditions are this season, it's never too late to add some new ones into the mix.

# Loft Ridge Community Updates

**Seasonal Decorations** - Seasonal decorations – whether they be a simple wreath, carved pumpkins for Halloween, or colorful holiday lights -- lend a warm and pleasant atmosphere to our community. By the time you get this issue, we will be in the middle of the holiday season. Here are a few things that should be kept in mind when decorating for the holidays:

- Please be considerate of your neighbors' sensibilities when decorating.
- Please be certain that your electrical cords and connections are in good order.
- Please turn off lighted decorations when retiring for the evening for safety reasons.
- Please water indoor live trees every day to prevent fires.
- Please remove your decorations by early January. Christmas trees are normally picked up by the County during the first two weeks of January.
- Do not dump any trees or other decorations on the common grounds or in the woods.

**Snow Removal: It's that 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.

While the Association has an established plan to plow our streets, it does not include plowing individual parking spaces. Please also 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.

If you choose to apply a de-icing 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.

If you have any questions about these or any other community matters, please contact Sequoia Management at (703) 803-9641 –or- [management@loftridge.com](mailto:management@loftridge.com).

## Preparing for the Winter Ahead!

When you have finished watering for the season, it is a good idea to turn off the water for your outside spigots from the interior bib, drain your spigots, and detach your hoses. A connected hose filled with water can freeze and break the bib, causing expensive water damage to your or your neighbors' property.

If you are going out of town during the winter months, please remember to adjust your thermostat so the temperature in your home and exterior walls does not drop below freezing, which may cause the water pipes in your home to freeze and burst during sub-freezing temperatures.

If planning to use your fireplace this season, please: make sure your chimney is clean; use properly seasoned wood; do not overload your grate with too many logs; use a screen; and allow ashes to cool completely before disposing of them.

## Hold your fire

This season, don't be too quick to light the Yule log. An insurance-industry survey reveals that more than 4 out of 10 homeowners fail to get their chimneys inspected every year, a measure recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency and many fire safety organizations.

Over time, carbon-based residue called creosote can build up in the flue and ignite, says Ashley Eldridge, director of education for the nonprofit Chimney Safety Institute of America. Plus, creosote or other obstructions, such as an animal nest, can cause potentially lethal carbon monoxide (a gaseous by-product of combustions) to back up into the home.

To find a certified chimney inspector in our area, visit [csia.org](http://csia.org).

*Taken from Better Homes and Gardens. December 2011.*

## Smart Strategies for Maintaining HOA Peace

The term “communication” should have a warm connotation. It denotes a form of fellowship. If you believe the media, however, communication is a lost art in many HOAs. News stories often characterize HOAs as police states with warlord boards. The HOAs that make the news often have one or two homeowners with a “my-home-is-my-castle” mentality, who disregard rules and regulations to challenge the HOA, and Boards that, when confronted with these challenges, react with defiance. Anger begets defensiveness, which invites retreat or counter attack. While there may be an element of truth in some of these stories, they are selected because they aren't the norm. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned from these communities-gone-wrong.

Good communication is the key to preventing a predominantly harmonious community – like the one we are blessed with in Loft Ridge – from turning into an acrimonious battlefield. The ability for boards and neighbors to communicate “artfully” with one another is paramount to maintaining HOA harmony. Good communication skills are necessary when negotiating with neighbors, soothing the ruffled feathers of feuding neighbors, and enacting rules that invite compliance rather than evoke defiance.

What is communication? According to Webster’s, “communication” is “to have or hold intercourse or interchange of thoughts; to give, or give and receive, information, signals or messages in any way, as by talk, gestures, writing, etc.” Here are some tips for improving HOA communications from Beth A. Grimm, a California attorney who serves HOAs and homeowners alike, and is a frequent author and speaker on HOA civility:

- Learn “active listening,” which is actually listening and paying attention when a person is talking to you. This technique doesn’t mean that you agree or disagree with what is being said; it simply lets others know that you hear them.
- Try to imagine the conflict from the other person’s perspective. Don't form assumptions about right or wrong. If you already have your mind made up, compromise is more difficult.
- Don’t do the driveway ambush. No matter how well you know your neighbors, confronting them when you’re less than cool-headed is never a good idea. If you’re friends, or even sort of friends, call or send an email saying that there’s something you’d like to discuss, and set up a time to talk. If you don’t know them well, pop over next time they’re outside and invite them to come by at their convenience.
- Learn how to release the pressure. Visualize an angry person like a balloon that is blown up to its maximum. It can't take any more pressure without popping. Now imagine letting some of that air out by listening to a belligerent person for a few minutes. Once people feel like they have “had their say,” the more open they are to receiving ideas and compromising.
- Respond to communications in a business like way and without anger. Ignoring communications from a neighbor who has an ax to grind often leads to more and stronger demands, and possibly personal attacks.
- Count to ten. Take a walk, a break or a breather before you react. Answers given in anger rarely solve the issue and usually make the situation worse.
- The art of surviving each other in an HOA environment has long term benefits which can help grow neighbors and friendships. This is an art worth perfecting, especially if you are in a position of leadership and authority.

## ***Hannah and Marie Encourage Others to Find Fun & Fitness With Senior Women's Basketball***

Are you looking for something to do that will enable you to get great exercise, meet new friends, travel, and revive those basketball skills you thought you'd lost (or never had)?? Are you a woman age 50 or over? If so, fear not!

Basketball is available to you in the form of the NOVA United Senior Women's Basketball Association, and its new affiliate, the Arlington Senior Women's Basketball League. Both organizations offer opportunities for women 50 and over to play, depending on skill level. The Arlington league is for anyone – even beginners – and offers skill training opportunities. NOVA United consists of competitive teams who travel to state, national and international tournaments, and compete at a higher level. Both organizations include women playing into their 70s!

There are two women in the Loft Ridge community who play basketball – one in the 55-59 age group, and one in the 60-64 age group. They recently competed in the Huntsman World Senior Games in St. George Utah. Tournament venues this year included, for example, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and the National Senior Games in Houston, Texas. NOVA United is often asked to play “exhibition games” during halftime of college games (for example, George Washington, George Mason, Marymount, US Naval Academy, and Duke), and have played several times during halftime of the Washington Mystics WNBA team's games at the Verizon Center.

“It's an opportunity to excel at something you did as a younger person,” exults Marie Danco, a Lofthill Court resident. “Because you play against people in your own age group, you can still be competitive, no matter how old you are.” Hannah Phillips, who won a bronze medal in the 10K (6.2-mile) run at the Houston National Senior Games, lives on Ridge View and says that finding fun, and health-inducing ways to be active is a critical key to taking the time and effort to commit to what otherwise would be boring, dull exercise that's hard to invest in.

“Having the opportunity to have senior competition has opened a new world to me, in some ways. While expenses are involved to travel, the investment is having the payback of a different set of friends, socializing and enjoying activities you wouldn't otherwise. And now, it's great to have the local league on Wednesday night – it adds another dimension to the arena to enjoy opportunities to grow and develop at any age close to home,” she says. “And in senior basketball for ladies no less!” Hannah also recently competed in the Northern Virginia Senior games, winning gold in several other events among the 50+ set, including the 1600-meter (1-mile) run, the 800-meter (1/2-mile run) and the 200-meter sprint. Not stopping there, being allowed to experience new physical activities over age 50, she entered her first bicycle road race sponsored by Northern Virginia Senior games, and won that event in her age group as well. “Definitely, a lot of positive reinforcement helps to take the stress of the day away,” Hannah says.



*(Cont'd on next page.)*

## Senior Women's Fun & Fitness (cont'd)



Both women encourage others to explore the possibility of playing basketball again. "We need more players – especially those in their 60s," says Marie. "There are lots of opportunities to play, and the camaraderie can't be beat. We're all very supportive of each other, and it's a great way to get exercise while having lots of fun, and improving our skills." NOVA United players practice each week on Friday night. The Arlington league has 8-game seasons throughout the year. For more information on both leagues and opportunities to see us play, visit the NOVA United website at: <http://sites.google.com/site/novaunitedbball/Home>.

"Give serious consideration to playing basketball again, if you have the least bit of interest," says Marie. "You won't be sorry for exploring this new and exciting avenue." As her email tag line (a quote from George Bernard Shaw) says, ***"You don't stop playing because you get old. You get old because you stop playing!"***

## Upcoming Loft Ridge Board and Committee Events

### Upcoming Board Meetings:

Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Mark Twain Middle School Lecture Hall

### Upcoming ACC Committee Meetings:

Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at 5703 Gladden Ct.

Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at 4334 Gingham Ct.

### Upcoming Communications Committee Meetings:

Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

5707 Evergreen Knoll Court

All are invited to join in!

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

# HOLIDAY FUN IN OLD TOWN AND BEYOND

## Christmas at Mount Vernon

Date(s): 11/25/2011 - 01/06/2012; recurring daily

Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Location: Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens

Admission: \$15/adult, \$7/child, 5 and under free

## Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours

Date(s): Dec. 10

Time: 6 - 9 p.m.

Location: Gadsby's Tavern Museum 134 N. Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Admission: \$5-\$20

## Children's Kwanzaa Craft Workshop

Date: Dec. 11

Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St, Alexandria, VA,

Admission: \$5



## Local Freebies and Discounts for Good Students

### Scholarly Sustenance

- **Pizza Hut Three A's Program:** Elementary and middle schoolers with a trio of A's just need to show their report card at select franchises to receive a free personal pan pizza & small drink or milk.
- **Krispy Kreme Good Grades Program:** Get 'em while they're hot. Take home an Original Glazed doughnut for each report card A (half-dozen maximum).
- **Jason's Deli JD Pickle Reward:** Teachers and parents can award children under 12 with J.D. Pickle Cards to redeem for a free kids' meal.

### Awarding Activities

- **Topps of the Class:** Bring a report card to participating "Home Team Advantage" hobby stores to clinch a free Topps trading card.
- **Brunswick Bowling Games for Grades:** Practice makes perfect. Score a free game for each report card A at Brunswick Zone and Zone XL.
- **Blockbuster Good Grades, Free Rental Program:** Film fanatics will enjoy this perk for having a GPA above 2.7 or an 80% average.

### Head of the Class (Check to see if your kid's school-is affiliated with these programs)

- **Noodles & Company School Tools:** Bring in a certificate for perfect attendance, honor roll, good citizenship or fitness to choose a free bowl of pasta.
- **Color Me Mine Bookmark Program:** Kids who meet their reading goals earn a prize, such as free paint time or a ceramic piece, at this paint-your-own pottery studio.
- **Six Flags Read to Succeed:** free admission to nearest theme park for K-6 students completing 6 hours of non-school-related reading; for more info, go to [readtosucceed.discoveryeducation.com](http://readtosucceed.discoveryeducation.com)

### Get served a free kids' meal through these restaurant programs:

- A Is for Applebee's
- Friendly's Achievement Award
- Pizzeria Uno School Award Certificate Program
- Bob Evans Star Student Program

## One Tank Trip:

### Breezy Bermuda by way of Baltimore!

Did you know that the Port of Baltimore offers cruises year round to beautiful and exotic places like Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Caribbean? In 2012, Carnival, Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises will be offering bookings out of Baltimore. And it's only about a one hour drive from Alexandria!

Just ask Michele Schafer. She and her husband have been to Bermuda twice over the past seven years through the Port of Baltimore, once with Royal Caribbean and once with Norwegian Cruise Lines. In 2005, they set sail alone with Royal Caribbean on a 5-day cruise to Bermuda. The ship departed Sunday evening, and it took that night and a full day to sail across the Atlantic. They arrived on Tuesday morning, and spent 2 days docked in the Royal Dockyard.

While in Bermuda, they took a bicycle tour of the island, a trip to the beach, and an excursion to St. George for shopping. The bicycle tour provided a little history of the island, some out-of-the-way places for them to explore, and interesting information about island living. For example, they learned that most Bermudian's rely on the roof tops to collect drinking water! Since they are on an isolated island, they have to store the rainwater for drinking later. The beaches are beautiful, with white and pink soft sand, and the water is crystal clear. And, the bright colors of Bermuda are found everywhere, from the paint color on the homes to the business men wearing pink and yellow shorts to work!

In 2009, the Schafers returned, this time with their then-5 year old daughter, for another 5-day cruise to Bermuda, this time, docking at St. George. For this trip, they decided to sail on Norwegian Cruise lines, which offers a kids club with a variety of daily activities for the little ones arranged by age. The cruise line had scheduled story times, pizza parties, outings to see shows, and much more. The Schafers were also able to go on a Glass-Bottom Boat tour with their daughter, and walked to the beach as a family from the ship.

Make sure you have a passport, and then enjoy your own one-tank trip to Bermuda!

The Schafers use [CruiseMaryland.com](http://CruiseMaryland.com) for cruise information.



***Do you have a one-tank trip you would like to share? The trip doesn't have to be fancy or exotic, you just have to be willing to share it. If you are, contact Mary Kelly at [comChair@lofttridge.com](mailto:comChair@lofttridge.com). Your neighbors would love to hear about it!***

# » SMALL TOWN NEWS «

## Local Girl Wins Top Honors!!!

Eliza Z. wins outstanding artist award in her first grade class, and also graduated from a Daisy to a Brownie. Way to go Eliza!!!



## Kudos on 2011 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.**

**We're especially grateful to these folks, who went the extra mile:**

**Janelle Abeles,  
Teresa Bearden,  
Cordi Everett,  
Alison Ferlauto,  
Marta Gospodarczyk,  
Mary Kelly, Bob Lucas,  
Christina Lyster,  
Lisa Staesina,  
Melissa Perriera,  
January Tkach,  
Virginia Ramsey,  
Jennifer Warren, and  
Erika & Don Wheeler**



## Area Kids Win Big at 2011 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):*  
Konstantinos T.

*First Place Winner - Broom Race (5 and up):*  
Tyson W.

*First Place Winner - Broom Decorating:*  
Jayce B.

*First Place Winners - Mummy-Wrap Race:*  
Two sisters who did not leave their names!!!

All first place winners received a trophy and a \$10 gift card to Cold Stone Creamery!



*This is a new (and hopefully recurring) feature in our newsletter designed to help further foster a sense of community in Loft Ridge. We hope that you enjoy it and will contribute to it. We cannot thank and celebrate everyone in our HOA, but with your help, we hope to acknowledge most. If you have something you would like to post in our Small Town News, submit your information to [comChair@loftridge.com](mailto:comChair@loftridge.com). Your neighbors would love to hear about it!*