

# December 2020 – January 2021



76 South Orange Ave, Ste 302, South Orange, NJ 07079 | 973-558-0863 | SOMA2towns@gmail.com |

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## Senior Freeze Property Tax Updates

The Senior Freeze Program has been re-installed and the deadline extended until December 31st. In addition, the eligibility income has been raised to

- \$89,013 in 2018 and
- \$91,505 in 2019.

All eligible residents will receive rebates this year.

Applications were mailed to the last address you filed with. If you did not receive your booklet, contact the Senior Freeze Property Tax Reimbursement Information Line at:

(800) 882-6597

For more information, go to [www.state.nj.us/treasury/](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/) taxation and look for "Property Tax Relief".

## *The Newsletter for South Orange and Maplewood Residents 60+*

### Introducing Carmen A. Morales

Long-time Maplewood resident Carmen A. Morales has joined Cathy Rowe as a SOMA Two Towns for All Ages coordinator. Our joint efforts will provide a comprehensive view of the issues facing older adults in the two communities of Maplewood and South Orange. Carmen has an office in the Maplewood Senior Center at 106 Burnett Street and can be reached at (973) 762-8120 x4006.

### Elder Fraud

The holidays are a prime time when older adults and seniors fall victim to identify theft, scams and financial crimes that are committed through the internet, phone or mail. Some of those scams pertain to your Medicare, someone claiming to call from the IRS or Social Security, someone pretending to be your grandchild in need or in trouble, fake charities, lottery winnings, account lock-out, just to name a few. Avoid being a victim of fraud by not providing any personal identifying information like social security number, name, address, etc. to anyone you don't know.

For more information and tips on how to avoid these scams, go to <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/on-the-internet> or <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/senior-scam-alert>.

You can also sign up for alerts and report suspicious activities with AARP's Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud](http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud).

### Stay COVID-Safe

It has been a long, hard time social distancing under COVID, but don't let your guard down yet. Keep your gatherings small this holiday season. You can see family, just perhaps not all at once. Wash your hands, wear a face covering/mask and maintain social distancing of 6 feet when you are out in public.

### Follow us

On Facebook at [soma two towns for all ages](#).

On Twitter at [@soma2towns](#)

and our website at [www.somatwotownsforallages.org](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org)  
for our latest events and activities.

To Sign up for our community calendar and eblasts, email [SOMA2towns@gmail.com](mailto:SOMA2towns@gmail.com) with "add me" in the subject line.

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## Come Home to Our Village



Our 62+ well-maintained community is located in the heart of vibrant South Orange Village with plenty of social activities, a live-in super and available kosher meals; near restaurants, shopping, parks, entertainment and transportation.

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Cheryl Kasye, Site Manager: **973-763-0999**

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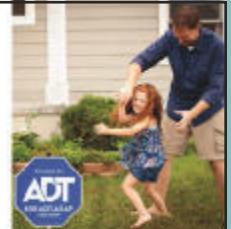
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### Universal Design - How to Improve Your Bathroom

As discussed in the last issue, following the principles of universal design can make your home age-friendly while keeping it both fashionable and practical for anyone who visits or lives with you. Universal Design makes spaces accessible to all people, regardless of their age, size, or ability, and in-home renovations will make it more appealing if and when you choose to sell. This issue, let's focus on the bathroom.

The typical Maplewood and South Orange houses were built from 1920-1950, with only one bathroom upstairs. Whether you are installing a downstairs bathroom or remodeling the main one, consider the principles of Universal Design and outfit your bathroom with elements that will make it safe and easier for everyone.

1. Install a Taller Toilet. Most toilets range from 14-15 inches tall. Installing a taller model, 16-inch or higher, makes it easier for people with limited mobility.
2. Widen the Doorway. Just going from a standard 32" doorway to 36" makes it more accessible for anyone using a walking assist device or needs help, from a toddler to a great grandparent.
3. Install Slip-resistant Flooring. Using either small mosaic tiles or larger tiles with wide grout lines provide good traction, even when the floor is wet. If you can't replace the flooring, consider replacing your bath mat or small rug with a larger one that won't slide or be a trip hazard.
4. Think About Your Hands. Using large D-shaped drawer and door handles is a quick and inexpensive way to make it easy for people with arthritis to get into the room and into storage. For faucets, consider a single-lever design that can be turned off and on with an open palm or a closed fist.
5. Install Grab Bars. Sturdy, installed grab bars add safety and can be fashionable too! Place bars near the toilet and in the shower and bathtub to ensure people have something to grab onto for stabilization. DO NOT use suction cup or removable grab bars.
6. Opt for a Walk-in Shower. If you are doing a larger remodel, walk-in showers are both stylish and practical. Without the height of a tub to step over, you can move in and out of the shower easily.
7. Include a Shower Bench. Whether installed in the wall or purchased separately, a bench can serve as a perch for people with limited mobility to sit on while bathing. When not in use as a seat, the bench can be used to store bathing necessities.

For a good selection of photos and ideas, visit the Better Homes and Gardens Website at [www.BHG.com](http://www.BHG.com) and read their article on Universal Bathroom Design Ideas, or visit [www.AARP.org](http://www.AARP.org) and search for articles on bathroom remodel, or look at the "AARP Guide to Revitalizing Your Home." For ideas and articles on an age-friendly home and universal design, go to [www.somatwotownsforallages.org/an-age-friendly-home](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/an-age-friendly-home)

### Real Examples of Merging Style with Safety

In this bathroom, note the *mosaic floor* gives traction, the *wide door* shower, the *single lever* for the shower handle and the *D-shaped handle* on the shower door.



Below, this example has a vertical *grab bar* as part of the shower head and a *built-in bench* that doubles as a shelf for shampoo and bath items.



### 9 Ways to Reduce Anxiety During Unprecedented Times

"Having some fear and anxiety over coronavirus is perfectly normal. But if anxiety begins to impede your ability to care for yourself or others, it's a problem," says Peter Bolo, MD. Staying calm during challenging times such as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is not easy, but it's possible. Reduce your stress with these 9 tips:

1. **Meet Your Basic Needs.** Create a new daily schedule. Prioritize healthy eating. Hydrate regularly. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. A new routine will help ease the chaos.
2. **Prioritize Your Health.** Manage any current medical conditions. It will help you feel better and will offer greater protection if you get sick. Avoid alcohol or drugs, which can heighten anxiety.
3. **Stay Intentionally Calm.** An occasional outburst is OK, but staying composed most of the time will benefit you and others. Free apps like Calm and Headspace have brief meditation exercises to help you self-soothe.
4. **Get Outdoors.** Walk, hike, bike or jog.
5. **Be Kind to Yourself.** You're probably already doing a good job under this very stressful situation, so give yourself a pat on the back.
6. **Connect with Others.** Use online messaging and video apps to talk with family members and friends. Host virtual game nights or family dinners.
7. **Use Uplifting Words.** Remind loved ones you appreciate them. Reassuring language soothes unsettled feelings.
8. **Limit Media Exposure.** Stay informed with reputable media sources but take screen breaks so every "breaking news" banner does not create stress.
9. **Get Creative.** Any major crisis is an opportunity for creativity. Turn hand-washing into a 20-second "spa" for your hands. Sing your favorite oldie but goodie and pick a new song each day. Create a playlist of your special songs. Ask your children or grandchildren for help!

*From New Vitality at Atlantic Health System, Fall 2020. Peter Bolo, MD is the Interim Medical Director, Atlantic Behavioral Health; Chairman of Psychiatry, Overlook Medical Center; and Resiliency Advocate, Atlantic Health System. For more information about New Vitality, call 1-844-472-8499 or visit [www.atlantichealth.org/newvitality](http://www.atlantichealth.org/newvitality).*

### "FIT" TIPS: How to Build Your Walking Routine by Risa Olinsky

Scientists tell us that with proper distance and precautions, we can exercise outside. The simplest and safest exercise for most is walking. Use these "FIT" Tips to help build your routine and your stamina for a healthy winter

**F is for frequency:** How many days/week would you like to walk? Set a reasonable goal. Perhaps three days/week and then add more as you get stronger. Or a short walk every day.

**I is for intensity:** What's your pace or distance? Is your route flat or hilly? Intensity will vary with these factors.

**T is for time:** How long do you plan on walking? You may start with a 10-minute stroll around the block and build on this until you can walk for 30 minutes or more at a time.

Also remember these keys to success:

**Training:** Build your "FIT" plan slowly. Better to do less more often, than too much too soon.

**Find a Friend:** Commit to each other and you'll be more likely to follow through with your goals.

**Lapses:** Life gets in the way, even with the best planning. Don't be discouraged. Put your walking schedule on your calendar - it's an appointment, as is anything else you do.

### Check Out the Live Exercise Classes Online

Since you can't get out to your favorite exercise class, our fitness instructors are coming to your home!. Robin Weber and Yvonne Christianson are holding live classes on Zoom, Mondays-Fridays, with 2 classes a day to choose from. Offering Zumba, yoga, chair yoga, senior fitness, toning and more, you can join friends and neighbors in live, interactive classes. In addition, find links to recorded exercise classes that you can do anytime. Check out the schedule and information for joining at [www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/exercise-online)

### Libraries Offer New Resources and Adapt Programs Under COVID

The South Orange and Maplewood Libraries are the centers of our community, offering so much more than just books. While hours and attendance are still limited in order to operate safely, you can enjoy their speakers, programs and events on line, and use the libraries' e-resources at home. Go to their websites for a complete list of all they offer, or ask for help at the front desk. You can get eBooks, audio books, use the libraries' magazine and newspaper subscriptions. Both libraries offer "Kanopy," a service that offers thousands of movie and television shows that can be viewed at home. Both libraries also offer wifi hotspots that can be borrowed to use at home.

If you do not have a library card or if yours has lapsed, now is the perfect time to get one. You can do so in person or online at each library's website, subject to their terms and conditions.

The libraries have adapted their regular programs to be enjoyed online or by phone. Their monthly bookclubs continue, South Orange library is holding its Creative Writing class Wednesdays at 1 and Special Conversations with Special People on Fridays at 1. Maplewood Library just completed Ideas Festival and continues to host speakers—see their calendar for details.

To get the most out of all the libraries offer under COVID and beyond, contact them directly.

Maplewood Main Library: (973) 762-1622

[www.Maplewoodlibrary.org](http://www.Maplewoodlibrary.org)

Email [library@maplewoodlibrary.org](mailto:library@maplewoodlibrary.org)

South Orange Public Library: (973) 762-0230

[www.SOPL.org](http://www.SOPL.org)

Email: [librarian@sopl.org](mailto:librarian@sopl.org)

*And best wishes to South Orange Library Director Melissa Kopecky for a very happy retirement after 16 years of service to our community.*

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## NEVER MISS A NEWSLETTER !

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to you at [www.ourseniorcenter.com](http://www.ourseniorcenter.com)



## Local Events

## December 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Check out the events page at www.somatwotownsforallages.org for the most up-to-date listings of local events	1	Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)  Handmade Holidays 7pm (MC)	2	Outdoor Holiday Market 4-8pm, Sloan St Parking Lot, S. Orange Blues People 7:30pm SOPAC
Maplewood Garden Club 7:30pm (G)	7	Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	8	Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)  Handmade Holidays 7pm (MC)
	14	Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	15	Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S) Read Around the World 7pm (M) Handmade Holidays 7pm (MC)
➡ look at Dec 20 for Classical Maple- wood, 4-5:30pm, pending COVID re- strictions (A)	22	Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	23	Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S) David Broza 8pm- SOPAC-
<i>Happy Kwanzaa December 26— January 1</i>	29	Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am	30	Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)
	1		3	Special Conversa- tions with Special People 1pm (S)
	10		11	Special Conversa- tions 1pm (S)
	17		18	Home for the Holi- days 8pm, SOPAC- <i>First Night of Hanukkah</i>
	24		25	Special Conversa- tions with Special People 1pm (S)
	31		26	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
	27		28	<i>Happy 2021!</i>

For information on these events, use this key:

A = <http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org/>

G = [www.maplewoodgardenclub.org](http://www.maplewoodgardenclub.org)

M = [www.maplewoodlibrary.org](http://www.maplewoodlibrary.org) or call (973) 762-1622

MC = Morrow Church <https://morrowchurch.org/>

S = [www.SOPL.org](http://www.SOPL.org) or call 973-762-0230

SOPAC = [www.SOPACnow.org](http://www.SOPACnow.org)

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## "Big Five" Recycling Mistakes

By Linda Beck,  
South Orange Environmental Commission

Over the past few years, uncomfortable truths about the failures of recycling have grown in media stories from a trickle to a steady stream. In the recent months, recycling right here in SOMA has also been heavy on our minds, as the South Orange agreement with its recycling hauler runs out at the end of this year. While we plan the future of recycling in our community, we find ourselves asking what WE ALL can do to ease the burden of recycling in our own homes.

The biggest impact on the success or failure of recycling, of course, is to **reduce** the waste at the source. That means **refusing** (politely) plastic forks, knives, and spoons at take-out restaurants, choosing not only to carry groceries in reusable bags, but also buying loose produce rather than produce packaged in plastic or plastic net bags. We should continue to do our best at **reusing** and **repairing** items whenever possible, something that you distinguished members of the septuagenarian, octogenarian, and nonagenarian community here in SOMA particularly excel at doing and at encouraging others to do. The slightly younger of us who grew up indoctrinated by the false claims of consequence-free consumerism have a lot to learn from your dedication to learning and growing and fixing systems that are broken.

Because recycling messaging has been so cloudy, even the most well-intended of us are likely making a number of recycling mistakes. One mistake can doom the entire bin, unfortunately, so it's up to us to be diligent. Here are the "Big Five":

1. Keep the plastic bags out of the bin! Plastic bags are considered film plastic, and the sorting machines choke on them. Your recycling candidates should be loose. That also means being on the lookout for plastic film elsewhere, for example, on the inside of the tissue box!

2. Rip it out before the box goes in the bin.
3. Keep your cardboard clean and dry. Cardboard has a surprisingly good recycling success rate. However, if it gets wet in the rain or there's a pizza grease stain on it, it will get denied passage onto the path to reincarnation. Cut the grease stains out with a pair of shears.
4. Paper recycling just about breaks even. However, neither shredded paper nor paper bits smaller than the size of a Post-It note should go into the bin. The machine can't handle those. Also, tear or cut out the film on window envelopes before you put it in the bin.
5. Metal is still doing okay! Rinse out your metal cans before placing them in the bin. There's thankfully still a market for this raw material.

Plastic is a problem – give it the best chance. Look at the numbers. Our haulers only accepts plastics with a number 1 or a number 2 on them. They are hard to see, it's true, but no other plastics should be put in the recycling bin.

In general, the most important thing to remember is to give your recycling candidates the best chance. For now, the golden rule is, if you don't know for sure it can be recycled, keep it out of the bin. We wish for a brighter recycling future, but we need to move out of the practice of "wish-cycling."

*Note: The Recycle Coach phone app is a great way to check and see what you should do with different items per your address. It's free to download and looks like this:*



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### Check Out Live Stream Performances

As COVID closures continue, theaters and concert halls are closed. However, there are many opportunities to enjoy performances through "live streaming," the broadcast of a live event "streamed" over the Internet. The look and feel of the broadcast captures the excitement of being in a live audience.

While **SOPAC**'s doors may be closed, it is still providing great, live streamed entertainment. "Tickets" or links to the events are \$10 and free to SOPAC members. Upcoming events include La Cinematheque Film Club and Broadway Rocks Cancer, both on December 13 and Joan Osborne on January 29. Some community events like Virtual Trivia are free with registration. Events are being updated and added frequently, so visit [www.SOPACnow.org](http://www.SOPACnow.org).

**Paper Mill Playhouse** is offering live-stream events with "Sing in A New Year!" Dec. 19-Jan. 1. A showcase of Rodgers and Hammerstein's hits will be shown Feb. 13-26. Go to <https://papermill.org> to see the calendar and buy tickets.

**Maplewood Arts and Culture** is a great resource for arts, music and performances, some in person and some live streamed. New information is being added regularly at [www.maplewoodartsandculture.org](http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org). Coming up (pending COVID restrictions) are Flamenco Dance classes and World Percussion classes starting in January. Register at [www.maplewood.recdesk.com/Community/Program](http://www.maplewood.recdesk.com/Community/Program).

### Online Classes

This may be a long winter with continued COVID disruptions but it is also a perfect time to explore lifelong learning and take advantage of online programs:

"One Day University" has worked with hundreds of professors to develop entertaining versions of their best lectures. No grades, no tests, no homework—just the pure joy of lifelong learning. There are new talks every day and members have access to their video library. You can try it out for 2 weeks FREE, then pay \$7.95 per month or \$72 a year. Go to: [www.onedayu.com/nyt](http://www.onedayu.com/nyt)

"Coursera" offers a range of courses, including those towards a degree. Many are offered for free. Go to: <https://www.coursera.org>. The "South Orange Maplewood Adult School" continues its outstanding classes and events, some in person if conditions allow and others online. Check out open classes now and new listings in January at: [www.somadultschool.org](http://www.somadultschool.org)

### Ring in the Holidays with Morrow Small Groups

Morrow Memorial Methodist Church continues its great sense of fellowship and creativity with Advent Small Groups, a series of events to capture holiday traditions in new ways.

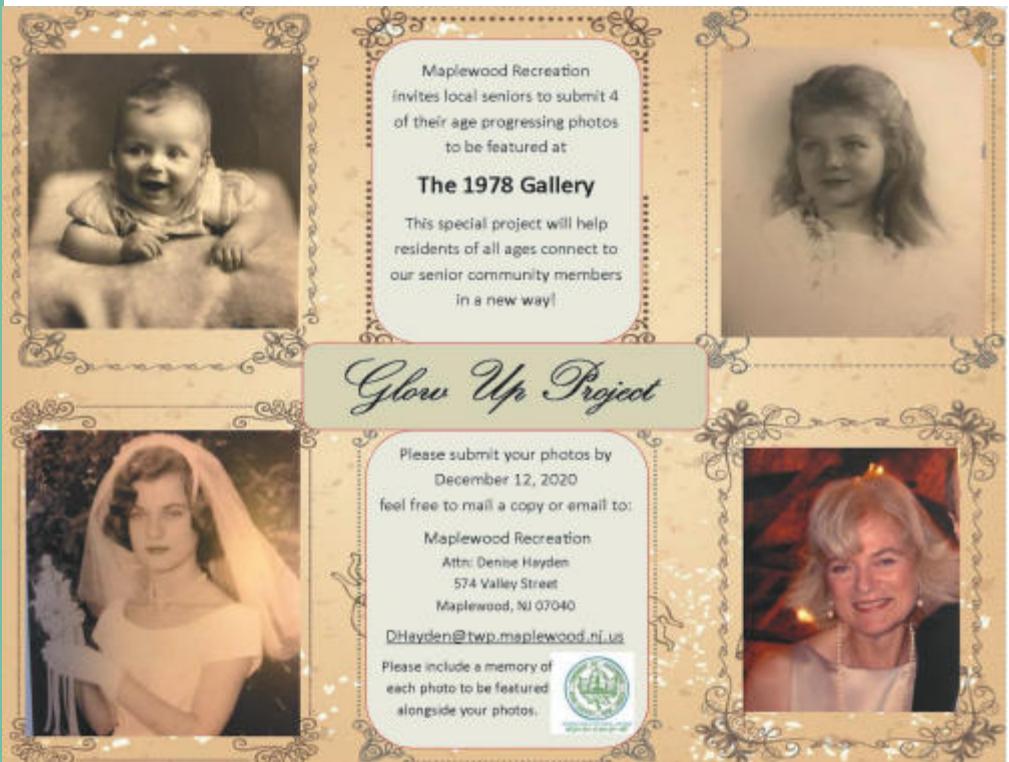
Winter Weekend Walks - Saturdays 12/5; 12/12; 12/19, 10am  
Join your Morrow friends in person, outdoors for a morning walk. Each week a different Morrow friend picks and leads a walk they love with a different starting location and route.

Cookie Exchange - Sunday afternoons, Dec. 6, 13, 4pm

Handmade Holidays - Wednesdays, Dec. 2, 9 and 16 , 7pm

To sign up and see the complete list of small group events, go to <https://morrowchurch.org/ministries/small-groups/>

### Share Your Photos for the Glow Up Project and Art Exhibit!



## Local Artists Win Big in Annual Art Competition

The Essex County Senior Citizens Juried Art Show was open to professional and nonprofessional artists ages 60 and older. Artwork was judged on originality, composition, style, quality and creativity. Of the 33 artists winning awards at the 2020 annual art contest, 7 are from SOMA.

Maplewood residents

- Mary Franklin, 1st place in the non-professional acrylic category for "Hope."
- Nikki Pusin, 1st place in the professional sculpture category for "Qurtle."
- Jill Vondervor, 1st place in the professional watercolor category for "Atlantic City."
- Arlene Silva, 2nd place in the non-professional mixed media category for "The Wedding."
- Peter Astor, 2nd place in the non-professional acrylic category for "Undertow." South Orange residents:
- Annette Kushen received 1st place in the professional digital category for "Untitled."
- Gail Gardella received 2nd place in the profes-

sional oil category for "The Flower Station."

To view the artists' work and learn more about them, see the Artist Spotlight at [www.maplewoodartsandculture.org](http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org).

Are you an artist? Join the SOMA Arts Registry at [www.soma-artsregistry.com](http://www.soma-artsregistry.com) or call (973) 843-7157 for details.



"Hope" by Mary Franklin

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## Captions Service for Zoom, Webinars & Conference Calls

By Pearl Feder, LCSW

In the last issue, I discussed the various assistive technology that provides captioning for the hearing impaired and deaf. I described the simplest way to hear what is being said is with the use of captions through various, innovative pieces of assistive technology equipment available to us.

Since we all Zoom these days, whether it's for business or family, Relay Conference Captioning of New Jersey (known as RCC) provides free captioning for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and individuals who have speech difficulties, for FREE. RCC provides real-time captions to any internet connected computer, laptop or mobile device. The minimum requirement to use this service is

- a) having a high-speed internet connection;
- b) Microsoft Windows 10 or newer, or OS X and
- c) Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome or Safari with cookies and JavaScript enabled.

For example, if I know I have a Zoom meeting next week and I am hearing impaired, I go to [www.njrelaycc.com](http://www.njrelaycc.com) and complete a reservation form for a live captioner to be present in the Zoom meet, conference call or webinar. The application will ask for some specifics. A meeting ID and password for a Zoom meeting. A dial in number, access code and/or URL for a webinar. A teleconference bridge number, access code for a conference call.

In the meetings, you will not see the face of the captioner but they will be present on the screen. The captions will be on a separate screen and only those people provided with the link to the captioning will see the captioning. If you know 2 or 3 people will need captioning, one person can apply and provide the names of the other participants. All those requiring the captions will receive a link to the RCC captioner. The captioner listens in and provides everything said in captions. For speech-impaired individuals, the captioner speaks for the individual. The speech-impaired individual types the words to be said to the captioner.

Go to [www.njrelaycc.com](http://www.njrelaycc.com) at least 2 business days before your meeting to put in a reservation for a captioner-although I strongly recommend doing it sooner as captioners are in high demand. RCC is available Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm and Saturday, 8am-2pm. You can also request a transcript at the time of booking, for free. See picture below for a sample of a meeting with captions.



For Pearl's previous articles and information on Hearing Assistance, see the new page on our website under the tab "Health & Hearing."

For information on technology and listings and links for events go to our website:  
[www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org](http://www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org)



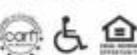
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## Outdoor Holiday Market Comes to South Orange

The South Orange Village Center Alliance is pleased to host an open-air Holiday Market this season. This temporary outdoor retail Marketplace will sell finely crafted jewelry, apparel, accessories, art and gift items from our local retailers and many of our area's finest local artisans and craftspeople. The Holiday Market will be held in the Sloan Street parking lot on Thursday evenings, December 3, 10 and 17 from 4pm-8pm and noon to 3pm for Christmas Eve Shopping on December 24. The market will provide the community with great gift options while offering an outdoor, socially distanced holiday shopping experience.

*All COVID-19 guidelines will be strictly implemented and enforced.*

## Need Tech Help?

So many things are moving online, it's hard to keep up. That's why we now have a page on our website dedicated to technology. With videos, instructions, definitions and links, you can find what you need to stay connected and take advantage of the many programs now offered on Zoom, watch live performances, take a class, join the senior fitness instructors and so much more. And if you can't find what you need, let us know so we can help you and others broaden your tech knowledge. Check it out at

[www.somatwotownsforallages.org/  
technology-101](http://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/technology-101)

## From "How Right Now"

**How Are You Feeling?** We are often asked this, and we say "fine." But this has been a difficult time lately, and emotions can be complex. You may be feeling sad, worried, or stressed. It helps to stay positive and remind yourself of your strengths. Try

[www.HowRightNow.org](http://www.HowRightNow.org) and  
read the article "( Ways to Reduce Anxiety" on p. 3 for more tips.