

June—July 2021



SOMA

Two towns for all ages

76 South Orange Avenue, Suite 302, South Orange, NJ 07079 | 973-558-0863 | www.SOMAtwotownsforallages.org

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The Newsletter for South Orange and Maplewood Residents 60+. SOMA Two Towns for All Ages is an initiative of the towns of Maplewood and South Orange working to support and empower all residents to age in place in their homes and their community.

NJ Moves to Become an Age-Friendly State

Recently, NJ was accepted into the AARP Age Friendly Community. This can have a significant impact on all older New Jerseyans, taking the efforts of local initiatives like South Orange and Maplewood statewide and increasing the focus on issues that help residents age in place.

Within 18 months of Governor Murphy's Executive Order to create an Age-Friendly State Advisory Council, Human Services will issue a blueprint of best practices for advancing age-friendly practices in transportation, housing, inclusivity, community support and health services. In addition, the Governor's proposed budget will target financially struggling residents and includes:

- an expansion of the Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) program to make prescription drugs more affordable and increasing the number of eligible seniors,
- proposal to make seniors without dependents eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC),
- increases in the reimbursement amounts for hearing aids and for people enrolled in the PADD or Lifeline Utility Assistance Program.

To learn more about the PAAD and Lifeline Utility Assistance Programs, contact the NJ Division of Aging Services at www.state.nj.us or call 800-792-9745. Stay tuned for updates on how the State budget will benefit senior citizens and progress on the State's age-friendly plans.

Classic Card Program is BACK!

The Classic Card is a free card for SOMA residents 65+ that offers discounts at local restaurants and businesses.

As many local businesses struggled under the COVID restrictions, now is the perfect time to get out and shop, eat and play locally. We welcome **Yellow Rose Vegan Bakery & Café** at 410 Ridgewood Rd. in Maplewood to the Classic Card network! Yellow Rose opened recently and offers classic card holders 10% off Wed, Thurs & Fri from 9am - 3pm. Check them out at www.yellowrosevegan.com.

To apply for a Classic Card or get an updated directory of participating merchants, go to the Classic Card tab on our website at www.somatwotownsforallages.org

If your business would like to participate, please e-mail us.



Governor Murphy's Budget will raise the income limits for the PAAD and Senior Gold programs by \$10,000 each



DHS' Division of Aging Services will launch the **Age Friendly New Jersey initiative**, in partnership with AARP, to help support communities become accessible and inclusive places to live at any age



The Governor's Budget maintains **the 10 percent rate increase for Medicaid nursing facilities** with an investment of \$87 million in state dollars for a total of \$174 million after federal matching

Gary T. Jones
Financial Advisor

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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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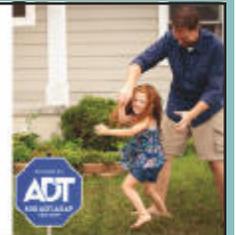


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SOMA Two Towns for All Ages, Maplewood, NJ

06-5292

Civic Participation and Engagement

MEET THE SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

An age-friendly community theme is civic participation and engagement. South Orange and Maplewood have official committees to represent the views and concerns of older residents. The committees work with SOMA Two Towns for All Ages and help the towns shape policy, introduce programs and highlight ways to enable residents to age in place as active, engaged and respected members of our communities.

The Maplewood Seniors Advisory Committee is composed of Maplewood residents appointed by the township to advocate for and represent senior concerns in our community. They meet once a month on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Committee members are: Joan Crystal and Sydney Larrier, Co-Chairs. Committee Members: Laura

Whitmire, Claudine Baptiste, Jeri Harmon, Nettie Thomas, Marilyn Schnaars, Donna Plotnick, Judy Kramer, Cathy McCoy Bristol. Township Committee liaison: Deputy Mayor Dean Dafis.

To reach the Maplewood committee, please e-mail: maplewoodseniorsadvisory@gmail.com.

The South Orange Senior Citizens Advisory Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Tonia Moore and Shirley Gordon are committee co-chairs. Committee members are: Nan Samons, Sandy Lublin, Sam Convissor, Larry Aronson, Harold Colton-Max, Jackie Hershops, Lenore Berkman, William Graves, Sandra Dickerson, Pearl Feder, Michael Auer, Judy Targan and Karen Boss. Board of Trustee liaison: Karen Hilton.

To reach the South Orange committee, please email khilton@southorange.org.

4th Annual Volunteer Fair

One of our goals is to find ways of engaging our community, get them involved and have them share their talents with community organizations in need of volunteers. For the past 3 years, SOMA Two Towns for All Ages has held an annual community volunteer fair to connect residents with local organizations. The response has been great—over the first 3 volunteer fairs, more than 450 people met with 35 community groups to learn about their work and how they can help. COVID has highlighted the need for volunteers' help in many areas, so we are pleased to announce our 4th fair. The fair's goal is to engage not only our older residents but also those new residents to the area. Please join us on June 26th to share your talents with not-for-profit community organizations and help their cause.

Saturday, June 26, 2021

2-4pm

Memorial Park Amphitheater

(across from the Maplewood Train Station)

Rain date: Sunday, June 27, 2021

If you work with or know a local group that is looking for volunteers, please email SOMA2towns@gmail.com or call 973-558-0863 to sign up.

Do you want to become more involved, we are looking for volunteers!

If you like to write, edit, take photos at events, or interview people, consider being a contributor to the SOMA Two Towns for All Ages newsletter. With a growing circulation (over 2500 people!) we are looking for ways to make sure we are covering topics of interest to our older residents. We also need people to help deliver the newsletter to local sites. Any and all help is welcomed. Interested? Call (973) 558-0863 or email SOMA2towns@gmail.com with the subject: VOLUNTEER.

Are We Or Are We Not?

We're here! We've made it! We've been vaccinated (or will be fully vaccinated within weeks). NOW what??

With newly announced guidelines and social distancing rules mostly lifted, lots of people have started to head back to restaurants and parks and even beaches. And now it's time to ask ourselves how comfortable we are in doing the same. Comfort levels differ for all of us. What's comfortable for a person who is active, working and has a good healthy immune system is quite different from the comfort level of someone who catches a cold that turns into pneumonia easily or someone who has a chronic health condition. So let's all take an inner gauge of how we're feeling - NOT how someone is telling us to feel but how YOU really feel about being less than 6 feet from the next person, sitting in the same row as you in a movie theater or baseball stadium or park bench.

If you're confused, as many are, about how to judge your comfort level perhaps looking at the local testing rate and whether the numbers of positive Covid cases are going up or down might guide your choices. A decreasing number of Covid cases gives a good idea of how safe journeys around town will be. However, safe doesn't mean no risk and being social and around people brings with it a certain level of risk. Unfortunately, while COVID 19 still lurks out there the professionals tell us that there will always be a risk for resurgence and/or another wave or variant. So, while the professionals are imploring us to get vaccinated, talk to your personal doctor - decide what's best for you. Take some time to take care of yourself. If you must see that friend, grandchild or just get outside and see the world, keep practicing the 3W's (Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, Watch your distance (6 feet apart), Wear a Mask). Be WELL and if you need assistance, please reach out to Carol Berman, MSW, LSW 973-986-4321 or sosocialworker@southorange.org.

COVID VACCINATION CARD

Should you laminate your vaccination card? The CDC and health organizations say "no". Laminating the card will prevent the vaccine provider from recording future vaccine shots or boosters on the card. You can protect your card from damage by keeping it in a removable plastic sleeve. You can also protect your card and the record of vaccination on it by taking a picture of the card and keeping it in a place where you keep other important papers, or scanning it to your digital device. Lastly, if you want to share that you got the vaccine, do not post a picture of the card on social media since it contains sensitive information like your name, date of birth, and vaccination site. Identify thieves love that information. Experts recommend you treat your card like your social security card since it is private and uniquely you.

SCAM ALERTS

PACKAGE SCAMS

If you receive an e-mail or text telling you "Your package(s) were delayed in transit, for live tracking click here". You may think that someone sent you a package when in fact they did not. This is the latest scam targeting individuals. If you receive one of these, do not click the link. If you ARE expecting a package, go directly to the source shipping it (i.e. Amazon, Costco, etc.) to verify the information. If you are not expecting a package and not sure who sent it, ignore the message. In most cases, the tracking information is provided to the sender of the package and not the recipient.

SOCIAL SECURITY SCAMS

The IRS, Social Security, or any government agency will not contact you by text or e-mail unless you have initiated the correspondence. If you have any questions, contact them directly and never provide any personal identifying information.

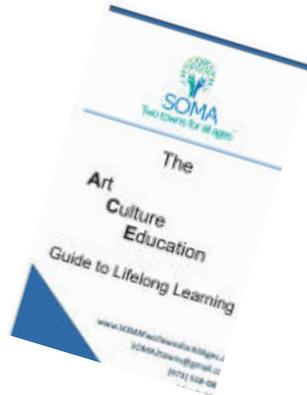
CONTRACTOR SCAM

Local police have reported the return of an old scam: a "repair person" knocks on the door and offers to help or take a look at your house. Then they spill water on the floor or create some other mess and say it is a leak and offer to fix it for a price. NEVER let a repair person or contractor come into your home unless you asked for an estimate or advice yourself.

Art, Culture and Educational (ACE) Guide to Lifelong Learning

In perhaps the worst case of timing ever, SOMA Two Towns published the Art, Culture and Education Guide to Lifelong Learning on March 1, 2020. Immediately after, most items listed were shut down due to COVID. This guide serves to connect older, post or near retirement residents with opportunities to explore the many resources in our area. It can be found on our website under the "Classes, culture" page or a hard copy can be mailed to you by calling 973-558-0863.

As things reopen and you find your confidence level in participating in events, check out the list-



ings in our guide and call or check see each organization's current status and schedules. The places and programs listed are as eager to see you back in their galleries and audiences as you are to get out of the house!

Seton Hall University offers Classes for Seniors

Seton Hall allows residents ages 65+ to audit classes on the main campus in South Orange. "Auditing" means you attend and participate, but do not earn credits towards a degree. Fees to audit a class are \$100, or \$500 plus University fees if taken for credit. There are some course exclusions. For more information, call the Registrar's Office at (973) 761-9374 or e-mail them at registrar@shu.edu.

Seton Hall is slowly resuming performances, some live and in person and some virtual. Contact them at www.shu.edu/arts-council.

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to you at www.mycommunityonline.com



Local Events

JUNE 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Events are rapidly developing so continue to check websites for new events and listings.	1	2 1pm - Creative Writing (S) 2-7pm-South Orange Farmers Market, Sloan Street Parking Lot, (Every Wednesday thru 10/2021)	3	4 1pm - Special Conversations with Special People (S)
7 2-7pm-Maplewood's Farmer Market (every Monday until 11/22/21) (FM) 1866 Springfield Avenue (corner of Yale Street and Springfield Ave)	8	9 10:30am -Outside Senior Toning (MSC) 1pm - Creative Writing (S) 2-7 pm SO Farmers Market	10	11 1pm - Special Conversations with Special People (S)
14 2-7pm-Maplewood's Farmer Market (FM)	15	16 10:30am -Outside Senior Toning (R) 1pm - Creative Writing (S) 2-7pm-SO Farmers Market	17	18 1pm - Special Conversations with Special People (S)
21 2-7pm-Maplewood's Farmer Market (FM)	22	23 1pm - Creative Writing (S) 2-7pm-SO Farmers Mkt	24	25 1pm - Special Conversations with Special People (S)
28 7:30pm Book Discussion Group (S) 2-7pm-Maplewood's Farmer Market (FM)	29	30 1pm - Creative Writing (S) 2-7pm-SO Farmers Mkt.	Key to organizers and registration: M = Maplewood Library, www.maplewoodlibrary.org MSC = call Maplewood Senior Center at (973) 763-0750 R = Maplewood Rec Desk or (973) 762-4202 S = South Orange Library, www.SOPL.org A = www.SOMATwoTownsforallages.org	

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On Twitter: [@soma2t](#) and our website at
[somatwotownsforallages.org](#)

Enjoy Live Music Saturdays in South Orange and Maplewood Villages

Summer Saturdays is back! South Orange Downtown is your go to destination for live music, local shopping and great dining. Join us every Saturday for live music in the downtown and in the Sloan Street Parking Lot at night. For weekly locations and schedule, go to [www.sovillagecenter.org](#).

In Maplewood Village, the Village Sunset Music Series provides the perfect sounds for your outdoor dining, shopping or just strolling experience on Saturdays at 6:30pm. The Saturday music series will feature the talent of locally-grown musicians. For the schedule of performers, go to: [www.maplewoodartsandculture.org](#) and sign up for their e-blasts of events.



JUNE is PRIDE Month

Join in the celebrations, discussions and fun of SOMA Pride events.

Plans include theater, film, dance parties, lectures and many free, fun, supportive and artistic expressions of LGBTQ pride.

For a list of events and more information about local Pride activities, go to <http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org/> and sign up for their e-blasts to get the latest events schedule.

Jewelry Sale to Benefit the South Orange Public Library

The Friends of the South Orange Public Library will hold their first ever Jewelry Sale on Saturday June 12, 2021, 11am-5pm, in the Library parking lot. The rain date is Saturday June 19. The sale will feature a large selection of vintage and costume jewelry so come and bring your friends for a fun and safe outdoor shopping experience that will benefit the South Orange Public Library. All jewelry is donated. Sale proceeds will fund Library services for the South Orange community. Cash or credit/debit cards only. *Face coverings required.*

Juneteenth

Juneteenth (short for June 19th) is celebrated on June 19th to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. It was in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 that slaves were told they were free thus putting into effect the Emancipation Proclamation. Officially recognized in Texas in 1979 and since then in many states. New Jersey has designated the third Friday in June as an official state holiday.

Join the Community Coalition on Race at the Durand-Hedden House, Maplewood, on June 19th, 11am-2pm, for outside activities as well as a tour of the "Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History" exhibit. Event is free, but advance registration is required. Admission is limited and Covid protocols observed. To register, go to www.communitycoalitiononrace.org/events.

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The Best Recycle App for Your Community

Ever wondered, “What items are recyclable? What can I do to save local wildlife species? When does my recycling get collected? What can I do to help climate change?” There’s an app that makes you a better recycler with very little effort. The Recycle Coach app is a handy suite of tools that shows you better ways to recycle over time. From up-to-date collection schedules to inspiring educational campaigns and our ‘what goes where’ tool, the app gives you what you need to become a pro-recycler. Contribute to a smarter, cleaner and healthier local municipality by downloading the Recycle Coach app that raises your recycling IQ.

Seniors, do you need home repairs?

Neighbor to Neighbor is a summer home-repair program offered by Morrow Memorial Church. Volunteer teams of adults and high school students provide home repairs free-of-charge to qualifying senior home owners. The teams of volunteers have helped homeowners with bathroom, kitchen and outside repairs. If you are in need of home repair, call Morrow Memorial Church at 973-763-7676. The volunteers will reach out to you to evaluate your project and will let you know if they will be able to assist you.

Tips for Decluttering your Home

Say the word “clutter” and it conjures up images of out of control piles and hoarding. Clearing up clutter is both emotionally and physically exhausting and one of the reasons we don’t attack it. For seniors, clutter can create physical hazards in the home. Organizational experts recommend that to control the clutter, you can follow some of these helpful tips:

1. Start by removing trash. Empty your wastebaskets, shred piles of papers you've been meaning to shred, and get rid of the junk mail piling up on your kitchen counter. Throw out anything expired like food and personal items. Dispose of expired or unused medication using the police station drop boxes.
2. Begin by choosing one small area to organize. Chunk it! Start with one drawer or one room at a time. Break up your work into smaller steps and smaller areas. Play some calming music while doing so.
3. Sort items into piles like keep, donate, sell, recycle, and toss. If you are holding on to things you used 10 years ago on the belief that you will “need it later”, ask yourself when was the last time you really used it.
4. Find a specific home for everything you intend to keep — for example, a hook for your keys.
5. Group similar items together and in the same place, instead of storing them in multiple places, so you always know where to find them.
6. If you buy something new, pledge to get rid of something else to limit items in your home.
7. Scan and digitize that box of photos. Upload them to a cloud service where you can download them as needed. Sort through your photos and get rid of duplicates or blurred ones.
8. If you're holding on to items to pass to the next generation, ask your heirs if they want the items. Be prepared for them to say no, and don't be insulted if they don't want it.
9. Don't try to do everything all at once. Schedule limited amounts of time to work on decluttering and organizing on a regular basis.

List compiled from various sources like the AARP and <https://seniorsafetyadvice.com/decluttering-tips-for-seniors/>

SOCIAL SECURITY SURVIVORS' POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR SAME-SEX PARTNERS

Lambda Legal has recently won class action lawsuits in the trial courts challenging the application of discriminatory state marriage laws to prevent same-sex partners and spouses from receiving Social Security survivor benefits. Although the cases are being appealed, Lambda Legal is recommending that people who had previously been denied benefits or who never applied for benefits should contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) at 1-800-772-1213 to have their cases reviewed. According to the organization, the cases of Ely v. Saul and Thornton v. Commissioner of Social Security affect two groups:

1. Individuals who would have been married to their same-sex partner for at least nine months before their death but were never able to marry because of discriminatory marriage laws where they lived, or
2. Individuals who married their same-sex spouse but were unable to be married for at least nine months before their spouse's death because of discriminatory marriage laws where they lived.

For more information on this topic, go to the Lambda Legal's FAQs at https://www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/20210218_thornton_faq or https://www.lambdalegal.org/blog/20210219_ely-thornton-class-info.

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Senior Bus Services Resume!

COVID disrupted the Senior Bus Services in both towns so we are pleased to announce they are re-suming with health and safety in mind. Both towns will:

- Require riders to wear a mask for the foreseeable future,
- clean vehicles frequently
- operate at less than full capacity to ensure riders can maintain a safe distance.

Each town will resume their service as follows:

South Orange is launching a new, fully accessible bus thanks to a grant from the Community Development Block Grant. Service will begin on a limited service, from 10am - 3pm, 3 days per week starting on July 5. To schedule a trip, call 973-378-7715, ext. 2037.

Maplewood is resuming its shopping trips starting in mid-May through end of August 2021, including Shop Rite on Fridays. To schedule a trip, call (973) 763-5287.

In addition, **Essex County Special Transportation** has resumed its free, handicap accessible service within the county for doctor's appointments, shopping, banking and other essential errands. You must register for this service before your first ride. Call (973) 618-1280 between 9am-3pm to register for the services.

Vaccine Update May 2021

We have come a long way since March 13, 2020, when many things closed or were altered due to the threat of COVID. Now, with vaccinations on the rise and infection numbers dropping, we can begin to re-open and resume some level of activity and interaction safely.

Thank you to those of you who participated in the COVID Survey in April. From your feedback, we have learned what people are comfortable doing. We also learned that the overwhelming majority of our older residents are vaccinated or in the process of getting their shots. If you or someone you know is still looking to get their vaccine, appointments are opening as doses are available, and as more people get vaccinated, more doses are free. Many pharmacies are offering vaccines or you can still schedule one through the Essex County sites. There are plenty of appointments available and residents may now go to any site. Go to www.EssexCOVID.org or contact the Essex County COVID Call Center at 973-877-8456.

Until we reach herd immunity, which means 70-80% of the population is either vaccinated or proven immunity, it is still important to use caution. Continue to wear masks in crowded areas or when you are with people who might not be vaccinated. Wash hands frequently and maintain a social distance whenever possible. Most importantly, proceed at a pace that is comfortable for you to re-engage with old activities or even take on new ones.

The Hope and Healing Program at The Institute for Prevention and Recovery at RWJBarnabas Health offers programming to help you through this pandemic. You can go to their website at: <https://www.rwjbh.org/landing-pages/ifpr-hope-healing-program/>

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Staff Changes at STTFAA

After 4 years as SOMA Two Towns for All Ages Coordinator, I am leaving for a position in state-level advocacy at NJ Advocates for Aging Well. It has been an honor and pleasure to work with both towns, making SOMA an age-friendly community. I have met so many people and learned so much about my community - I am happy to call SOMA my home.

Long time resident Carmen Morales joined in October 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, to help with the expansion of the program. She has brought all of our efforts to a whole new level and is shaping plans for making our age-friendly efforts sustainable.

Now, I am thrilled to announce that long-time resident Tracy Carroll has joined Carmen and taken over my work. Tracy is the consummate SOMA resident, involved with many activities in both towns.

I look forward to following all that Carmen and Tracy do!

Cathy Rowe

SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES

We are pleased to announce that **Carol Ber-**
man, MSW, LSW, South Orange Senior Adult Social Worker, is now available to support senior adults residing in Maplewood as well. Many of you have already met Carol as she held virtual programs, support groups, chats and assisted many residents under COVID.

What can a senior adult Social Worker help you with? If you need assistance with food, housing, benefits and more, or are working through a challenge, Carol can help you navigate life's difficulties. Currently, Carol facilitates a general support group on Tuesdays at 4pm to talk about what is going on around us today and how people are feeling about life. You can join her through Zoom with Meeting ID: 951 7547 1880, Passcode: 666853 or go to www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org and click the link on the calendar each Tuesday. Carol has also started a group for grieving and loss which meets every other Thursday. Contact Carol directly at 973-986-4321 or sosocialworker@southorange.org.