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Thank you to Arline Walton for contributing the cover photos, which were taken during the House & Garden Club’s Drive-Through Food Drive held at NCB on Nov. 14. A recap of the event, also provided by Arline, appears on page 10.

The Villager welcomes photo contributions for cover consideration. Submissions must be emailed as high-resolution jpeg images to cking@oronoquevillage.com



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A GUIDE TO SNOW REMOVAL IN ORONOQUE VILLAGE*

By Bill Tanski, former OVTD president, assisted by Pete Penny, Roads Chair, and Mark Rhatigan, Director of Maintenance Operations

The OV Tax District is fiscally responsible for all snow removal in OV. This includes roads, driveways, parking lots and walkways. In this fiscal year we've budgeted \$40,000 towards snow removal.

But I would like to begin by telling a brief story about my first impressions of snow removal in our community. It was February 2014, just before Dorothy and I moved permanently to OV. I arrived the evening before a scheduled delivery of furniture was to occur. Our unit had been unoccupied for several months. During a severe winter, the front of the home was used to deposit snow, which resulted in a rather large mountain of it blocking the path to where the furniture was to be delivered.

I called Maintenance at 8 a.m., informing them the furniture was to be delivered at 9 a.m. Fifteen minutes later, OV workers appeared with a backhoe and shovels. At 8:45 a.m. the snow was removed. The furniture arrived on time, as scheduled. Our OV workers heeded the call and got the job done quickly. It was a very favorable first impression.

The following is an explanation of how snow removal works at OV.

What Is the Priority of Snow Removal in OV ?

1. Primary roads: North and South Trail, Agawam and Midwood
2. Secondary roads
3. Clubhouse parking lots
4. Driveways
5. Extra parking areas
6. Walkways

Why Aren't All Roads "Primary?"

Safety is our highest priority. To accomplish that, we need to ensure that emergency vehicles and personnel have access first to main roads, then to secondary roads. With snowfalls, we typically start with the main roads. When they are cleared, we next plow the secondary roads. On the rare times that snow falls at a rate of several inches an hour, we may focus just on the main roads.

But please be assured, our concern is all of the residents of Oronoque Village.

If I Live on a Secondary Road, Does It Mean an Emergency Vehicle May Not Get Through?

No, they will get through. EMT and fire personnel can get through even in extreme conditions. They are equipped to handle such calamities.

What Is Done Prior to Plowing ?

We spray "Blizzard Wizard" on the roads and driveways. It is done to prevent icing after the plowing, especially "black ice." It is an environmentally-friendly compound which prevents icing down to zero degrees. We may also use it after plowing if the storm is especially severe. This certainly beats spreading sand and saves us about \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year on sand cleanup. Of course, we will spray prior to an ice storm, even if snow isn't forecasted.

At What Point Does Plowing Begin?

We generally start plowing when the snow forecast calls for at least a couple of inches. We have purchased new equipment, such as larger snow blowers and trucks, to help accelerate snow removal.

When Is Snow Removed From Driveways?

Based on the priority schedule, driveway snow removal usually occurs after all the streets have been plowed. We will remove the snow, even if employee overtime is required, as we understand the importance of clearing the driveways for your mobility.

Do We Use Contractors for Road, Parking Lot And Driveway Snow Removal?

Yes, if we feel the storm is severe and our employees can't keep up with the pace. Keep in mind that sometimes our employees may start plowing at 6 a.m. and work well into the night. It can be a long and exhausting experience. We don't want our employees handling plowing equipment in an exhaustive state.

If we need additional help, we usually contact Burns Construction as they're nearby and know our roads.

What About the Walkways ?

While overtime is allocated towards street and driveway snow removal, walkways are mainly shoveled (by hand) during normal working times. The reasons are practical and economic. Most people can exit their homes via their garages, with the exception of some homes on the south side. Those homes' walkways are given priority.

There are about 1,000 walkways in OV. Snow removal of walkways is very labor-intensive. If the same priority was given to walkways as roads and driveways, it would add many thousands of dollars to the annual budget. There'd be significant overtime



and probably contractors added to complete the job in a few days.

In other words, your OV taxes may increase. The objective is to remove snow from walkways as soon as possible, without added financial burden to OV.

How Can Residents Help?

1. When a plow is at your driveway, please open the garage door as it will enable the plow to “back blade” and make a clear pass.

2. If possible, move any parked vehicles.

3. Please, do not ask the plow driver to do any “extras.” The task is to open roads and drives. They will clean up the day after.

4. Ice melt for resident use is available at both club-houses. Please take only the amount you can use.

What Should Residents Not Do?

Please do not call the Business or Maintenance Offices and ask for your road to be plowed. Our Maintenance folks have a good handle on what roads have been plowed, or not. Calling just adds more unnecessary time to the task at hand.

What If I Have a Special Health Need Or Have to Get to Work?

Priority can be given to a resident if there is a physician’s note detailing why driveway snow removal should be urgent. That note should be delivered to the Business Office.

However, going to work is not considered an emergency and it cannot be given priority status. Alternate arrangements should be made prior to the storm. We regret this might be an inconvenience, but the same practice applies in most municipalities.

In conclusion, the intention of this article was to not only familiarize residents about our snow-removal policies, but to also understand the rationale behind them. If you’re new to the Village, this information might be particularly useful.

On a personal note, I hope you consider the long hours and difficult conditions OV workers endure while battling winter storms. They are all trying their best to accommodate our residents and to make sure we are safe during winter’s worst. Snow removal can be a thankless job at times and it is impossible to please everyone. 

** This article was originally published in the Dec. 2, 2019 issue of The Villager. At that time, Bill Tanski was the president of the OV Tax District.*

Editor’s Note: For the current fiscal year, the \$40,000 budgeted toward snow removal remains in place.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIREWOOD IS AVAILABLE AT BOTH CLUBHOUSES

Firewood for residents' use is available at both clubhouses. We encourage you to use this firewood -- but please, take only what you need. Please do not store large amounts of firewood on or underneath your deck as this is an invitation for termites and other insects.

When using your fireplace, we urge you to keep in mind the following safety tips:

Your fireplace is primarily decorative and should not be used for heat or cooking. Used conscientiously, your fireplace will provide wonderful ambience on a cold winter's day.

Wood-Burning Fireplaces

Always be sure that the damper is open before you start your fire, while it is burning and until all embers are extinguished.

Never leave your unit while a fire is burning. Keep a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.

Be sure to have a screen or glass doors to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Be sure nothing flammable is near the fireplace.

Never burn scraps of wood or lumber, charcoal, magazines, garbage or plastics.

Make small fires: use only one artificial log or one or two wood logs. Build your fire toward the back of the firebox.

Make sure that the fire is out -- completely extinguished and cool -- and that ashes and residue are cool to the touch before attempting to clean out the fireplace.

Use metal containers to hold anything you remove from the fireplace; bring that container outside, at least three feet from any building or bush, to store it.

Never place fireplace residue in bags or boxes or non-metallic containers and never place removed material on a deck or porch or inside a garage or unit while awaiting final disposal.

If you burn wood once per week, have your fireplace professionally cleaned every other year.

If you burn wood more than once per week, the fireplace should be professionally cleaned once each year.

Gas Fireplaces and Heaters

Direct vent gas fireplaces and heaters must be from an approved manufacturer, must meet Oronoque Village's and other codes, and must be installed by a licensed contractor.

Through-the-wall gas fireplaces and heaters must be approved by the Architectural Committee and must meet Oronoque Village's codes, and must be installed by a licensed contractor. Through-the-roof venting is not allowed.

Provide adequate protection and/or alarms from oxygen depletion and carbon-monoxide poisoning. Purchase a unit that will disconnect the gas flow when the pilot light is not

lit. Fireplace shut-offs must be easily accessible from the unit.

Important: Never leave a burning fire unattended.

WINTER 2020 VENDOR LIST INSERTED IN THE ISSUE

A new Vendor List has been inserted in this edition of the The Villager. The six-page publication features business card-size advertisements from multiple vendors, ranging from heating and ventilation experts to plumbers and home improvement professionals.

Please be mindful that the companies included on this new list are paid advertisers. While we are providing this list to you as a convenience, we are not endorsing any of the products or services that are advertised.

Before hiring a contractor or any service personnel, it is imperative that residents review the following guidelines:

1. Always get references.
2. Always get written estimates and specifications.
3. Establish a payment schedule. Never pay it all up front. Always watch out for deals that are "too good to be true."
4. Get more than one bid for your project.
5. Check with the state Dept. of Consumer Protection (860-713-6100) to see if there are any negative reports regarding a vendor.

HADASSAH MAHJONG CARDS FOR SALE THROUGH DEC. 31

Oronoque Hadassah is offering mahjong cards for sale through Dec 31. Regular-print cards are \$9, large-print cards are \$10.

To order, drop off checks made out to Hadassah in the mailbox of Barbara Brown at 122A Cayuga Lane or the mailbox of Sharon Levinson at 608B Erie Lane.

Order forms were published in the Nov. 15 and Dec. 1 issues of The Villager.

UPCOMING EMPLOYEE HOLIDAYS

The Business and Maintenance offices will be closed on Friday, Dec. 25.

During 2021, The Business and Maintenance Offices will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Jan. 1	Labor Day, Sept. 6
Presidents' Day, Feb. 15	Columbus Day, Oct. 11
Good Friday, April 2	Thanksgiving, Nov. 25
Memorial Day, May 31	and Nov. 26
Independence Day, July 5	Christmas, Friday, Dec. 24

Dear Residents:



The deadline for contributions to the Employee Appreciation Fund is Friday, December 18.

Contributions to this fund reflect how much we appreciate the hard work and the commitment of our staff.

Each day, our Business & Maintenance Office staff members tend to the multiple needs of a vast and diverse community.

This is a once-a-year opportunity to say “Thank you for jobs well done.” To contribute, please drop off checks made out to OVCA Employee Appreciation Fund and place in the dropbox at the North Clubhouse.

Thank you for your consideration!

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VANILLA EXTRACT: A HOMEMADE GIFT IDEA

Homemade vanilla extract takes just two ingredients — vanilla beans and alcohol — and you can be as straightforward or creative as you like. Though it does take a bit of patience as you wait for the alcohol to extract the flavor from the beans, the delicious results are well worth it.

What Vanilla Beans to Use? You can use any vanilla beans, bearing in mind that different varieties and grades will have unique properties.

Bourbon or Madagascar vanilla has the classic, robust flavor that one typically associates with vanilla. Tahitian vanilla is subtly fruity and floral, while Mexican vanilla tends to be smooth and spicy. Create a single origin vanilla extract or invent your own blend — it's up to you!

Although Grade A or gourmet/prime vanilla beans are superior for cooking, in this case Grade B or extract grade vanilla beans are ideal because they have a lower moisture content. Feel free to use whatever you have, though.

A note on pricing and sourcing: Vanilla beans can get expensive. While it's possible to find inexpensive vanilla beans in bulk from places like eBay, I also like to buy Fair Trade vanilla whenever possible. Mountain Rose Herbs is a good source for organic and Fair Trade vanilla beans.

What Alcohol to Use? Vodka has the most neutral flavor, but you can also use bourbon, brandy, or rum to create unique extracts.

There's no need to use a top-shelf or high-proof alcohol when making vanilla extract. An inexpensive 40 percent (80 proof) alcohol will work just fine. (Commercial vanilla extracts are typically 35 percent or 70 proof alcohol.) I prefer using a mid-tier alcohol, not bottom of the barrel but not too expensive, either.

How Long to Infuse? Let the vanilla beans infuse for at least one month and even a couple of months for a stronger flavor. You can also use more beans to speed up the process. If giving this as a gift before the infusion is complete, tell your recipient to let it mature for a number of weeks. Vanilla extract is kind of like wine in that the flavor will become more complex over time. **OV**



Source: This article as well as the recipe below was published in *theKitchn.com*, an Internet-based food magazine. The author is Emily Han, a Los Angeles-based recipe developer, educator, herbalist, and author of *Wild Drinks & Cocktails: Handcrafted Squashes, Shrubs, Switchels, Tonics, and Infusions to Mix at Home.*

RECIPE FOR VANILLA EXTRACT

Ingredients

- 3 to 5 vanilla beans
- 8 ounces alcohol such as vodka, bourbon, brandy, or rum

Equipment

- Cutting board and knife
- Clean jar or bottle
- New bottle(s) for packaging (optional)
- Small funnel (optional)
- Coffee filter (optional)

Instructions

Split the vanilla beans: Split each vanilla bean in half lengthwise. If you like, you can leave an inch connected at the end of the bean for an attractive presentation. You can also chop the beans into smaller pieces if necessary to fit in your jar or bottle.

Place the vanilla beans in a jar and cover with alcohol: Place the vanilla beans in a clean jar or bottle. Cover them with alcohol, making sure they are completely submerged. Cover the jar or bottle and give it a good shake.

Infuse for at least one month: Store the jar or bottle of vanilla beans in a cool, dark place for at least one month, shaking it from time to time. Taste the extract and let it infuse longer if you want a stronger flavor.

Strain it if you like: You may wish to remove the vanilla pods and decant the extract into a pretty bottle. The little flecks of seeds can be a nice touch, but if you want a clear extract you can strain them out using a coffee filter.

Or leave the pods in the extract: You can also leave the beans in the alcohol and top off the bottle as you use the extract. Eventually all the flavor will be extracted from the original vanilla beans, so you can periodically add fresh beans as well as leftover pods that you've scraped for other recipes.

Recipe Note

General Rule of Thumb: Use 3 to 5 vanilla beans per 8 ounces of alcohol and multiply accordingly if making more extract.

FEATURE

BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES



**By Carol H. Hamilton
M.S. Certified School Psychologist,
Psychotherapist**

After a tumultuous year of challenges beyond belief, the holidays and all they mean to us are back. It is easy to get swept away by our expectations of what they should be, or to "go all out" to compensate for all we

have missed.

I'd like to suggest a different perspective. Let's start with self-care. Before you immerse yourself in gift-buying and all the holiday rituals, now shaped by COVID-19, honor yourself by taking some time for self-reflection. Losses this year, whether within your immediate family or global, have been staggering. Worse, in our isolation, we've been deprived of those rituals of mourning that give voice to our grief and adjust to a new reality.

As a society, we don't have good models for grieving, and the belief that we should just get over it and leave those messy feelings behind can leave emotional debris that affects our future well being. "Feelings are mentionable and manageable," Mr. [Fred] Rogers, a lifelong student of psychology, said.

So take time to honor what's in your heart. Have a good cry if that's what you need. Acknowledge your anger, your frustrations. Feelings come ... and they, too, will pass.

Create your own rituals of remembrance. Light a candle, open the photo albums and tell the stories of those now gone

from your presence. If you can't find a sympathetic listener, write your stories. Interestingly, there is evidence that journaling on a regular basis is as effective as many talk therapies. If you happen to be on the listening end of someone's conversation, let them talk without interruption. Your best response is, "Tell me more," or other nonjudgmental encouragements. Both having and being a good listener are precious.

Now consider gratitude. It is, in the words of Cicero, the Roman statesman and philosopher, the greatest of virtues from which other virtues flow. In modern neuroscience, focusing on those things for which we are grateful activates the "happy" brain neurotransmitters, increasing our focus, connections to others and feelings of pleasure.

If you're struggling with being grateful in 2020, consider saying, "It's been a horrible year, and I am grateful for..." You may finish that sentence with anything, from a kind word or action you experienced, the presence of someone you love or admire in your life or some quality about yourself.

In this time of gift giving, consider writing notes of appreciation to those you care for or to those who take care of you. These have more power for you and the recipient if you can be specific. Think about your partners, children, relatives. The impact of a heartfelt letter could very well outlive the memory of yet another gift card or present.

Finally, we all want happiness. Having a sense that we have control over our lives, that we can make choices despite the troubles that surround us is a step toward having a more fulfilling holiday. **OV**

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE IN DISTRESS, PLEASE REFER HIM OR HER TO THE FOLLOWING HOTLINES:

Domestic Violence Crisis Center (24 hours): 888-774 -2900

Alcoholics Anonymous: 866-783-7712 or search for ct-aa.org/meetings

AlAnon (for family members of alcoholics): www.ctalanon.org/meetings

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255 or suicidepreventionlifeline.org



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Rich Patterson

House & Garden Food Drive Was A BIG Success!

5 full carloads of food and \$418 in checks!!



We did it!
 Even during a Pandemic, OV residents came out in droves on Saturday, November 14th to donate to the Sterling House Food Pantry! **5 full carloads and \$418 in checks** made it to Sterling House! We can all feel good to know that the food donated is badly needed and appreciated by Stratford residents. Sterling House is grateful for our support.

Thanks To:
 Debbie Grosso
 Irene Sanzone
 Ulla Adema
 Merrilees Leemhuis
 Tina Vermette
 Jackie Freeman
 Arline Walton
 Lynette Thompson

Thanks TO ALL OV RESIDENTS Who Donated!!



FACTS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES FLAG

Let a light shine! The American flag should be displayed only from sunrise to sunset, except if properly illuminated during darkness. This represents that the light will never go out in this country.

Unless the flag is made of all-weather material, it should not be displayed during inclement weather.

Hoist it up quickly. Take it down slowly.

The flag should be displayed every day, and especially on certain holidays.

The flag should be displayed on or near the main administrative buildings of public institutions, at schools during school days and at poll sites during election days.

If flags share a flagpole, the American flag goes up first and should be flown highest; the others flags should be situated below.

The flag represents a long legacy of people who fought and died to defend America. It deserves to always be treated with respect.



This article was inspired by an inquiry made during the November 2020 OVCA Board meeting in which the protocol for displaying the U.S. flag was addressed.

The information shared was learned from the following websites:

<https://www.aflag.com/flag-etiquette>

<https://www.military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html>

<https://innewsweekly.com/rules-for-flying-the-american-flag-at-home>.

If you would like to receive email alerts from the Connecticut state portal about flag flying status, go to <https://portal.ct.gov/flag-status/> OV

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FEATURE

A PLETMAN CONCERTS REPORT

By Elisabeth Breslav

First the sad news: Covid-19 will be with us for a while longer and – like our spring series – the fall series had to be canceled. I have heard from several of the scheduled performers. They expressed their regret but also the hope to be re-invited in the near future, and I assured them we were all looking forward to their performances as soon as safely possible.

But now to the good news (and a great big “thank you” to one of Pletman Concerts’ staunch supporters for helping me to discover the treasure trove of magnificent music available on the Internet).

Would you believe that I recently attended all nine Beethoven symphonies on nine consecutive afternoons, courtesy of the Royal Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra? And I do mean “attended,” because the video had me right there on the stage with the musicians, able to closely observe finger movements and facial expressions of individual instrumentalists. Even front-row seats in an auditorium do not offer such close-ups.

These beautiful programs, and many others like them, are surprisingly easy to find. Simply go online and type in: The Royal Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. A website opens; click on video results and pick from a selection that changes periodically.

You can follow the same procedure and check out the Opera National de Paris where I found a delightful performance of “The Crystal Palace Ballet” by George Balanchine, or The Royal Albert Hall for an enjoyable “Pizzicato Polka” by Johan Strauss.

And then, of course, there is always YouTube, which takes



Performances by the Royal Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra can be found online.

a bit more navigation. I found lots of good things by clicking on Classical Instrumental.

But perhaps you are in the mood for some great arias? You can hear a tear-provoking rendition of “Ave Maria” or “Nessun Dorma” by typing in Luciano Pavarotti and clicking on music videos. Or, try Frederica Von Strada and marvel at her “Rusalka” (Moon Song) or “Can’t Help Lovin That Man.”

Then again, type in The Three Tenors and click on The Three Tenors in Concert 1994, or The Three Tenors on YouTube and be prepared to be thrilled.

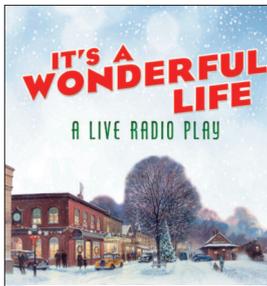
Until we gather again at NCB, let’s plan to chase the winter blahs by setting aside a regular time in our day to hear some of our beloved music. As a matter of fact, I would like to hear from anyone with a story of their personal experience with music in these dark times and, where possible, I’ll try to share it in the Villager. My email address is tulpenbol@att.net (please, no phone calls).

Have a safe winter everyone – enjoy the holidays --and many hours of happy listening.

OV

BEYOND THE VILLAGE

“It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play” transposes the cinematic classic (and holiday television tradition) to the theater by staging the story as if it was a live radio broadcast in front of a studio audience. Five actors perform the voices of dozens of characters while creating foley sound effects. As in the movie, everyman George Bailey must learn that “no man is a failure who has friends” (and a little divine intervention) when he must face off against local robber baron (and all-around curmudgeon) Henry F. Potter. It’s “a surefire reminder of what this season is all about” (Edge Magazine).



Performances are Thursday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 18, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 19, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 20, at 2 p.m.

In-person performances will be performed live at the Music Theater of Connecticut located on 509 Westport Ave.(Route 1) in Norwalk.

Live-streamed performances will be shown online through a link provided to ticket holders prior to their show.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit musictheatreofct.com/wonderfullife2020.

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HOW DO YOU HUG AN ELECTRON?

By Bob Macaluso

Thanksgiving 2020: I chuckled at the shouts of golfers searching for balls in leaf piles on the fringe of the fairway. There was no cover of snow to glide legendary horse-drawn sleighs to grandmothers' houses and everyone has been commenting that frost was arriving later each year. The "55ish-degree" late November day this year was the new expected norm and a warm rain shower threatened pre-dinner touch football games.

Instead of their usual post-dinner strolls, walkers lay comatose in turkey-induced dozing in front of TVs that streamed old Christmas movies and professional football games played in empty stadiums with piped-in crowd sounds.

A few giant balloons were accompanied by a few marching bands which did not play enough music to drown-out the pleadings for "just a taste - a little sliver" of the butter-basted turkey before its final browning in the oven.

The kitchen was not full of warm aromas emanating from a large, plump stuffed bird which had been roasting since the darkest early morning hours. Instead our ceremonial meal featured a wimpy boneless turkey breast surrounded by just enough sides to resemble our usual Thanksgiving feast.

We ZOOMed our children's familiar images but cold pixels could not substitute for warm hugs. We were just thankful to see everyone. Even though the boneless turkey breast wasn't all that bad, I can't wait until next Thanksgiving to carve a large plump bird in our dining room filled with people who we love and who we can hug. **OV**

NEW YEAR'S EVE, WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

By Anne R. Z. Schulman

The weatherman said it would be cloudy with periods of sunshine and a high of 42 degrees. Those planning to be in Times Square for the celebration were advised to dress warmly, but no umbrellas needed. The day before I had watched workers constructing the platforms for at least four TV stations' shows with enough space for performances. One sign said that stars of the Broadway show, "Jagged Little Pill" would be there along with entertainers of all the popular kinds of music.

On December 31st, the subway was packed with merrymakers on the way to 42nd Street. Many already had the crazy glasses shaped as 2020 and other colorful party paraphernalia.

Most were young people, but there were also family groups and I could hear French, German and Chinese in just one subway car. Faces were animated with excitement and anticipation. There was much joking and laughter, a bustling happy scene that brought out my smile though that was as far as the contagion went, because I had a sense of foreboding; in what way would these 20s roar?

We haven't gone out for New Year's Eve in many years, not only because of the expense or the crazy drivers, but because our anniversary is on December 30th and we do something special then. At some point during the winter, we mark the occasion once more in a tropical clime, so watching the ball come down on TV is fine. If some grandchildren are with us, we have a midnight meal and ice

cream whether in our Stratford or NYC residence.

We returned to Manhattan from our trip to Jamaica early last February before anyone knew that COVID from Europe, was already circulating. A few days later, after tromping around the city I started having chills, body aches and a sore throat. I thought it could be a mild flu though I religiously get vaccinated.

Then came the headache and fatigue, but I still took my granddaughter to Lincoln Center for her long-awaited dream of seeing "Swan Lake." I sat in the theater in agony trying to enjoy the exquisite feathered prima ballerina and Tchaikovsky. That was the last show I and so many others have seen. The lights are out on Broadway and all the other stages in the Big Apple. There are some Christmas windows in a few surviving department stores, but viewing is monitored. No adventurous tourists, no one at all will be in Times Square to witness the iconic sight.

But the good news is that we are still able to celebrate Chanukah, our 53rd anniversary and 2021 with our quarantine pod that includes our daughter's family in Woodbridge and Zoom with our children in New Jersey and Massachusetts. And the best news is that we have been blessed with good health and cautious optimism for the coming year.

I wish all of you such blessings. **OV**





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SCAM ALERT FROM THE FTC

TIPS FOR AVOIDING SCAMS

By **Bridget Small,**
FTC, Division of Consumer & Business Education

When you talk with friends and family over the holidays, you may hear about new puppies, old sports rivalries and dreams of the next vacation. As you join the conversation, why not share some ideas to protect the people you care about from scams? Read these tips from the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Pass it On campaign for ideas, and then tell people where to find them.

If your uncle mentions the unwanted calls he's getting from "Social Security," explain that the calls are from scammers posing as government officials. He can't rely on caller ID because scammers use technology to fake the numbers they're calling from. Remind him to hang up when he gets an unwanted call and let him know there are options for blocking calls, whether he uses a mobile phone, landline or gets phone service over the Internet.

While you're trading ideas with the cousins about websites for shopping, socializing and take-out meals, remind

them to protect their identity on those new accounts. That means using strong passwords and limiting the information they share. They can also monitor their credit with a free credit report each week from the three national credit-reporting agencies at AnnualCreditReport.com. Weekly reports are free until April 2021.

If your just-retired friend starts chatting about the great work-at-home opportunity she found online, ask if she has to pay up front for the opportunity. Ads that offer to help you start an online business — after you buy a training system — are often scams. People who buy the "systems" often get pressure to pay more for extra services, but don't get anything that really helps them start a business or make money.

Thank you for assisting the FTC by sharing information and helping people spot and avoid scams.

You can subscribe to our blog to learn about the latest scams. And, if you or someone you know sees a fraud, scam or bad business practice, please report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. Happy holidays.

OV

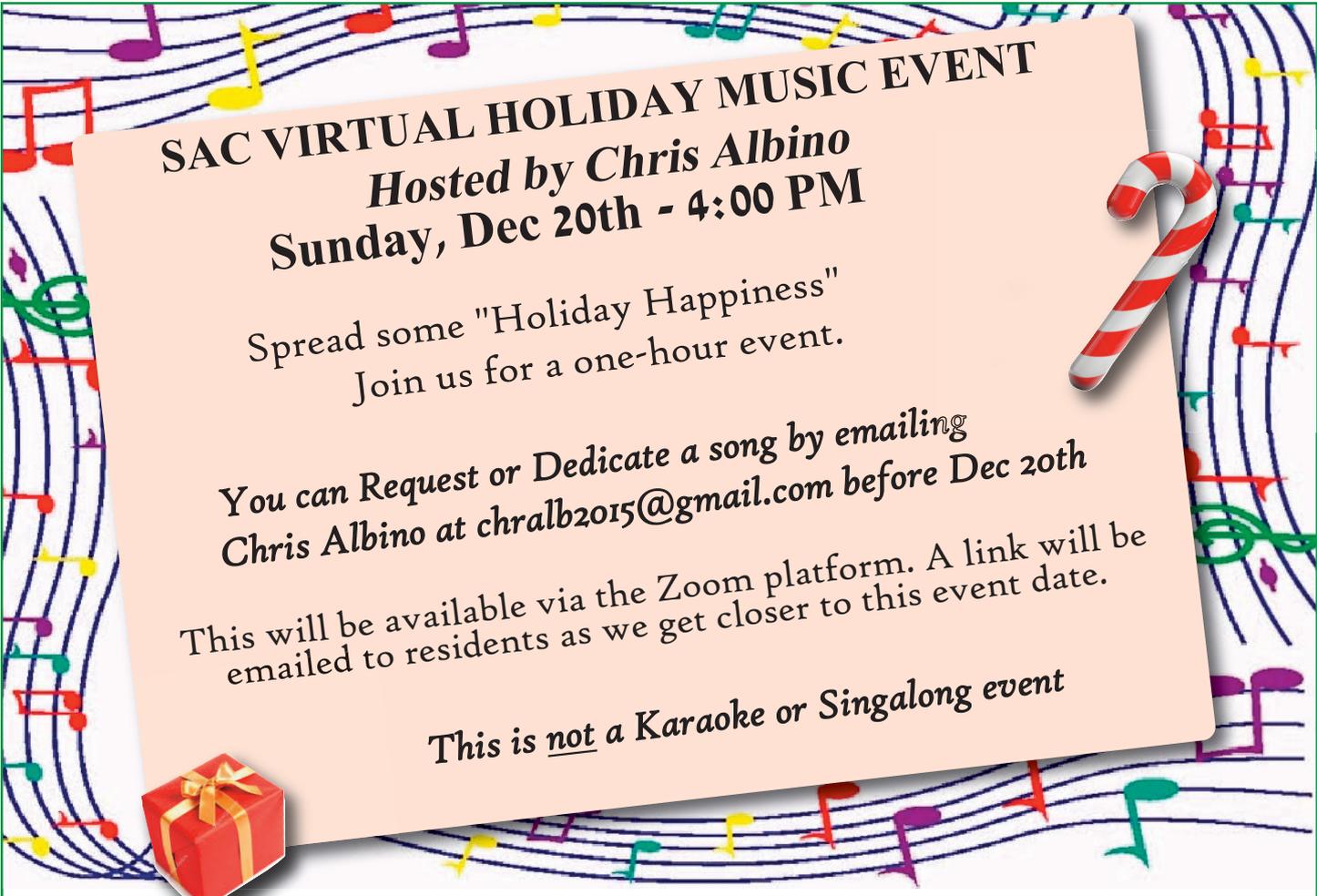


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Hosted by Chris Albino
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You can Request or Dedicate a song by emailing
Chris Albino at chralb2015@gmail.com before Dec 20th

This will be available via the Zoom platform. A link will be
emailed to residents as we get closer to this event date.

This is not a Karaoke or Singalong event



The OV Book Club will meet on Wednesday, January 6, at 2 p.m.
via [GoToMeeting.com](https://www.gotomeeting.com) to discuss *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

Where the Crawdads Sing is a fresh exploration of isolation and nature from a female perspective along with a compelling love story. The story is set in the 1950s and revolves around a young woman who is from extremely rural North Carolina. Known by others as the Marsh Girl, she lives alone in nature but draws others in.

Crawdads is a story lovingly told—one that takes its time in developing its characters and setting, and in developing the story.

You'll want to relax and take your time as well, and when you're done you will want to talk about it with another reader.

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