

February 15, 2022



THE VILLAGER



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Thank you to Sonya DeBiase for providing the cover photos, taken during the Social Activities Committee's "Celebrate 2022 on Jan. 22," which took place at the Blue Goose Restaurant in Stratford. A short article about the event appears on page 18. The Villager welcomes photo submissions, which must be emailed as high-resolution jpeg images to cking@oronoquevillage.com

Villager article submissions should be emailed — to Villager Editor Carol King at cking@oronoquevillage.com — as either text attachments or with text pasted into the body of an email. All Villager articles are edited to conform to the standards of The Associated Press Stylebook.



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MESSAGE FROM THE OVTD PRESIDENT



Linda Libertino

JANUARY 25, 2022

I want to say Happy New Year to the Village. Sure do hope it is a safe and healthy 2022 for all the residents and staff at Oronoque. Due to COVID, we are holding our quarterly meeting on Zoom. Thank you for attending tonight's meeting.

The best news for Oronoque Village in the last 12 months is the Oronoque Country Club and Golf Course being sold to a professional golf course company: Alliance! It will preserve our property values and wonderful lifestyle that have become our way of life. I want to congratulate and thank Fred Rodriguez. Over the past year, Fred played an intermediary role representing the Village's best interests, and he made a tremendous impact on the final sale.

On behalf of the Village, the Tax District thanks Mark Rhatigan and his staff for their excellent work on snow removal. Mark, special thanks for the ongoing alerts keeping us informed as to the status of the crews in regard to snow removal. In addition, Liza and Harris in the Maintenance Office work extremely hard in fielding the calls from residents regarding snow removal, and we thank both of them.

During the past four months, the Road Committee has worked tirelessly to develop — with Mark and Fred — a line of credit to accelerate the road repaving schedule to complete the remaining roads to be repaved in Oronoque from 7 years to 2-3 years. We feel this will provide value to our real estate and a safer, more attractive Village. Jonathan Towle is chairperson of this committee, and he and Fred reported in detail on this matter.

On Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m., there will be an Oronoque Village membership Zoom meeting to vote on the details of the line of credit for the accelerated road project. The following motion was made by Ray Vermette, seconded by Tom Becker and approved unanimously:

"In support of the projected \$2.0 million road resurfacing project proposed by the Roads Committee to be accomplished in the next two to three years rather than in six to seven years, I move that the OVTD Board recommends to the Tax District voters their approval at a special Tax District meeting of a three-year line of credit with the Milford Bank for up to \$1.250 million with an interest rate not to exceed 3.80 percent and with the provision that after the project ends the loan will be retired within five years with tax revenues histor-

ically budgeted in the amount of about \$300K yearly for road replacement expenses." **(Please see page 13 of this magazine for details on the outcome of this vote.)**

During the first week in March, I will be meeting with the Tax District Nominators from each district to begin the process of accepting resumes and reviewing them from residents who might be interested in running for a position on the Tax Board. During our April 26 meeting, the chairperson of the Nominating Committee will announce those residents who were reviewed by the Nominators.

Each January, the Tax District Board President announces the meeting dates for the next fiscal year. Those dates are: April 26, June 28 and Oct. 25, 2022 and Jan. 24, 2023.

I made a motion that Bill Tanski will be the chairperson of the Safety-Security Committee and Elaine Pivrotto will assist him on this committee. The motion was approved unanimously. Bill is a past president of TD and past chairperson of the Security Committee. Before retiring, Elaine served on the Bridgeport City Council and was a judicial marshal. I thank Dennis Caffrey for his dedication and service on this committee. Dennis will continue to serve as chairperson of the Tree Committee.

A motion was made by Tom Aubin for special (bonus) compensation for our Executive Director in the amount of \$3,500 as "reward for extraordinary efforts leading to the successful sale of OCC." Tom Becker seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. Tom Aubin stated as part of his reason for the motion that the successful sale of the Oronoque Country Club was, by far, the most important event for the year 2021 relative to our Village. The direct involvement of Executive Director Fred Rodriguez played an important part of this conclusion. Fred's endless hours identifying and nurturing potential suitors went far beyond whatever our expectations were for his role in this effort. Fred played the part of broker, hand-holder and Communications Manager at various times throughout the course of this sale. His efforts were extraordinary and should be recognized beyond a handshake.

The Tax District continues to have sound financial statements and the Finance Committee will continue to work closely with Fred and Mark to begin preparing a budget for the next fiscal year.

My quote for this meeting is: "The New Year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals." (Melody Beattie)

The Tax Board will continue to set and meet goals for the benefit of the Villagers.

OV

**THE RESULTS OF THE OV TAX DISTRICT MEETING OF VOTERS
HELD ON FEB. 1 APPEAR ON PAGE 13.**

HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OV DEVELOPERS, COUNTRY CLUB AND OVCA



Ray Vermette

By: Raymond Vermette

People familiar with Oronoque Country Club may wonder how an attractive, well-regarded 18-hole golf course situated in a RS-1 residential zone surrounding Oronoque Village became associated with the Village and why it is privately owned.

This article reviews the early development of Oronoque Village, the construction and ownership history of the country club and its current relationship to Oronoque Village Condominium Association (OVCA).

Information was obtained from Stratford's Land Records (SLR), Stratford's Zoning Codes, available legal documents and various articles appearing in print. The purpose is to recognize the changes in relationships over the past 50-plus years between the original Oronoque developers, the country club and the Condominium Association, resulting in important covenants and restrictions that were written into Oronoque Country Club's deed in 1992 which, today, protect the interests of OVCA and all the individual unit owners.

Construction of Oronoque Village in the northern part of Stratford, called Oronoque Hills, was approved as a Residential Open Space Development under section 4.1.6.12 of the Town's Zoning Regulations at a meeting of the Stratford Planning and Zoning Commission on Jan. 21, 1970. The developers — Chris Bargas, Norman Haflich and Thomas White — of the Bridgeport area, received their permit in a letter from the Commission, dated Jan. 22, 1970, allowing them to build, as a special case, a condominium development on two large parcels of land they had acquired on both sides of Oronoque Lane, totaling 304.6 acres and zoned RS-1 for one-acre single family housing. Stratford had enacted the zoning code section 4.1.6.12 in July 1969 for all future condominium developments in Town. The minimum parcel size for this type of development was 75 acres, the same as for today. The code consists of 18 subparts, 4.1.6.12.1 through 4.1.6.12.18, dealing with definition, permitted districts, minimum acreage of land parcel, accessory uses and buildings, maximum number of units allowed, maximum land coverage of the buildings, basement heights, etc. The complete 4.1.6.12 zoning code can be found on Stratford's Planning and Zoning Commission's website.

Chris Bargas and his partners started constructing units in 1970 along Algonquin Lane on the larger 169.6-acre parcel located south of Oronoque Lane. The smaller parcel situated north of Oronoque Lane contained 135 acres. From the total 304.6 acres, they reserved 146 acres of open land mainly

along the perimeter of each parcel to build Oronoque Village Golf Course and Clubhouse as an "Accessory Use" amenity under section 4.1.6.12.4 of the zoning code. Accessory uses and buildings are permitted under this section of Stratford's code when they are an integral part of the overall development to serve primarily the residents of the community. A community's accessory-use amenities include, but are not limited to, the following: "1. golf course; 2. tennis courts; 3. swimming pools; 4. recreational facilities and buildings; 5. meeting halls; 6. maintenance, storage and utility buildings; 7. parking garages". The developers received permission to build a golf course and clubhouse in the same letter as for the condominium development. They were required to build the clubhouse and golf course as "an integral part of the overall development to serve primarily the residents thereof."

By 1972, the golf course and clubhouse were functioning, and during the 1970s, north and south community buildings, swimming pools, tennis courts, maintenance and utility buildings also were constructed in the Village under the same "Accessory Use" section of the code.

The advantages of living in Oronoque Village were reviewed in a 1975 New York Times article written by Alan Oser after interviewing the developers and select owners. By 1975, 590 condominium units had been built, mainly as three- and four-room units with one bedroom each, averaging between 1,175 to 1,580 square feet per unit, excluding basement and garage.

The buildings consisted mostly of two-unit structures built with cedar siding. The developers employed, as planners, Desmond Muirhead, a well-known California golf course designer, and Ian Mcleod, a California architect, to create a California look to the development. The initial ideas of having three units to a building, a townhouse attached to two other units, one over the other, as in California, met with resistance among local buyers. The plans soon were changed to an East Coast-style with two units per structure with parking in the basement area. Most of the units sold initially for \$42,000 to \$59,000, each.

After units were purchased and occupied, the developers formed neighborhood community associations as required in the state's condominium law, Chapter 825. In 1975, the same New York Times article reported that 19 neighborhood community associations had been formed. Eventually, 929 condo units were built, and 25 neighborhood associations were responsible for the community's common property. In 1978 the 25 associations were consolidated into 11 districts and the districts merged into one community association called Oronoque Village Condominium Association (OVCA).

Continued on page 14

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPDATES FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

OV Archives: The archives exhibit is complete! Please visit the SCB Card Room near the kitchen and have a look at our past.

OVTV: The committee is examining options for utilizing the Oronoque Village TV station (Channel 591) for all sorts of programming. We're reaching out to the community to come up with ideas on what you'd like to see and what you may like to contribute. If you interested in joining a focus group to brainstorm, please contact Bruce Pollock at bap203@yahoo.com.

Online Address Book: The old Address Book is being updated and will soon be available on the resident side of www.oronoquevillage.com. Once the site's functionality is reviewed, residents will be contacted with further details.

The Villager: As part of the committee's responsibilities, we are reviewing all aspects of The Villager – the purpose, content, income/cost, frequency, etc. We invite your input. Are you interested in joining a focus group? Please contact Mary W. von Ziegesar at 203-767-9760 or MvonZ@optonline.net.

MINI FARMS DUES PAYMENTS ARE REQUESTED BY APRIL 1

It is time to collect Mini Farms dues for 2022. If you were assigned a garden previously, the dues are \$18 (if paid by April 1). After April 1, dues are \$20.

Please make checks payable to "OV Mini Farm" and include your plot number. Place checks in the outside drop-box at NCB.

Call Debbie Grosso at 203-380-2468 if you have questions or you have a plot that you no longer want.

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FUNSEEKERS' TREASURER OPENING

Funseekers is recruiting candidates for the Treasurer's position. Responsibilities include:

Control budget (income, expenses and committed expenses).

Update membership listing.

Make deposits/write checks for income and expenses.

Provide monthly financial statements at Board meetings and events.

Provide info to door helpers for entry to events.

Work with Board members in fulfilling the requirements of this position.

If you have interest, please call Lucy Clifford at 203-644-7710 or email lmclifford@yahoo.com.

PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY DOES NOT IMPACT TRASH PICKUP

The Business & Maintenance Offices will be closed on Feb. 21 in observance of Presidents' Day.

The holiday does not affect the trash and recycling pickup schedule. Pickup will occur on Wednesday, Feb. 23.

FREE, AT-HOME COVID TESTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

There are online resources that allow residential households to order up to four individual rapid antigen tests at no cost.

To order, visit <https://special.usps.com/testkits> or covidtests.gov and fill out the online form.

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OPENING RECEPTION HELD FOR GALERIE OV WINTER SHOW

By Barbara Stewart

On Sunday afternoon, Jan. 16, residents came to officially open the new Galerie OV art show, "The Eyes Have It," which is located in the SCB lobby. We met in the cozy setting of the SCB lounge to meet the exhibiting artists and to applaud the winners of the People's Choice Award from the fall show, "Transitions."

Ray Vermette and Barbara Stewart welcomed everyone and thanked them for complying with the COVID requirements of wearing mask and showing proof of vaccination status.

Barbara announced the winners of the Peoples Choice awards from the "Transitions" show:

First place - Pearl Spodick for her sculpture "Fear Transition," which will be on view in the SCB lobby through March.

Second place - There was an unusual tie between husband and wife, Jeff and Sharon Sells. Jeff won for his hyper-realistic painting, "Will They Ever Finish Waley Avenue?" and Sharon for her beautiful tapestry, titled "SEDAI," depicting three generations of Japanese women.

Next, Barbara complimented all the artists on their creativity in producing art that fit the theme of the new show. Artists were invited to speak briefly about their art as their pieces were presented in a slide show, which was produced by Peter Feick and Ray Vermette; Peter photographed all the artwork and Ray arranged the photos into the presentation.

For additional fun, we held a raffle of five bottles of wine, a Starbucks gift card and a soft, warm red blanket. Thanks to everyone who participated. The proceeds will go toward supporting Galerie OV activities.

Each attendee was offered a take-home packet of cookies, mixed nuts and chocolate candy in lieu of our normal appetizer and dessert offerings.

Barbara thanked all the members of the OV Arts Guild board and others who help install the new show and organize the opening reception. They are Liz Moretti, Patty Hadden, Arline Walton, Lee Schlafer, Pearl Spodick, Anita Cody, Maria Szalontay, Sonya DeBiase, Ray and Tina Vermette, Peter Feick and Bob Collins.

The participating artists in the current show are Kees Adema, Jean Ahlberg, Fred Brideschge, Anita Cody, Cheryl

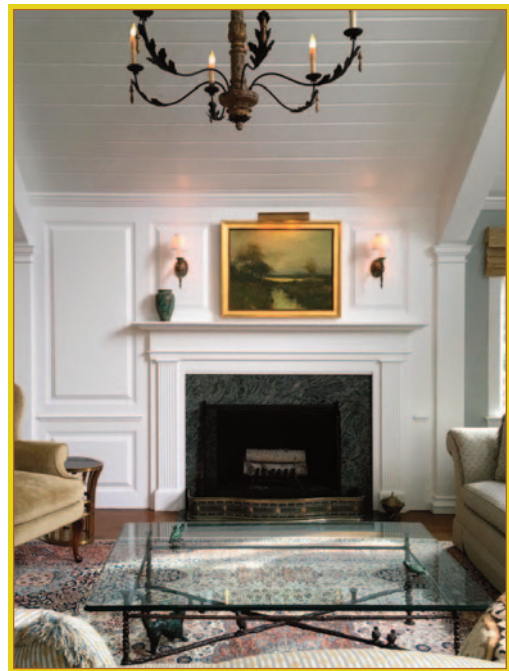


A slide show of artwork was displayed during the opening reception for the Galerie OV winter show.

Comen, Barbara Dierolf, Peter Feick, Lois Foster, Joseph Hayducky, Carole Guglielmino, Patricia Hadden, Carol Heym Hamilton, Carey Hamon, Catherine Hogan, Linda Kilton, Letitia Laberee, Sandy Lunt, Joe Mackenna, Betty Mulholland, Jerry Reece, Carole Sanetti, John Staley, Barbara Stewart, Wendy Swain, Kathleen Toombs, Peter Ulisse, Ray Vermette, Stephanie Weaver, Kathleen Wells, Karen Zimmerman and Renee Zinn.

OV

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ACTIVITIES

EDITOR'S NOTE: *To ensure accuracy, information submitted to The Villager must be sent via email, to Carol King at cking@oronoquevillage.com. (Submissions must be typed, in upper and lower case.) The deadline to be included in the next issue of The Villager, on March 1, 2022, is Feb. 16 at noon.*

CORNHOLE

- Cornhole is played on Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon, at SCB.

CURRENT EVENTS

- The Current Events Discussion Group meets in SCB Card Room 1 at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays Feb 16, March 2, 16 and 30.

DOLLCRAFTERS

- Dollcrafters meets at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays in the NCB Library.

DROP-IN BRIDGE

- Drop-in Bridge takes place on Mondays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the NCB Lounge. All levels of bridge players are encouraged to attend; no need to bring a partner. There is no fee to participate. For information, please contact Wendy Swain at 203-386-9125. Proof of vaccination required.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

- The Ladies Bible Study welcomes all resident women. Proof of vaccination is not required, but nonvaccinated ladies must wear masks. There are no fees to join. Purchasing study materials is optional. Meetings are on the second and fourth Fridays in the NCB Board Room from 10:30 a.m. to noon (excluding July and August.) Questions? Call Angie McKelvey (203-227-3222) or Tina Vermette (203-375-0291).



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LINE DANCING

- Line dancing classes are held on Wednesdays at NCB. Beginner classes are held at 9:30 a.m., followed by a class for all levels at 10 a.m. No masking is required for anyone who has received the booster or third shot. All others must wear masks.

LOW-IMPACT EXERCISE CLASS

- Low-impact exercise classes, taught by Renee Zinn, are held at 10:30 a.m. on Mondays and Fridays at NCB. Bring weights and water. Proof of vaccination and masks are required. Those without proof of booster shots must wear masks.

PING PONG GROUP

- Players of all levels are invited to join this group on the second floor of the South Clubhouse Fridays at 9 a.m. and Mondays at 6 p.m. For information, email Wayne Cotter at wcotter999@gmail.com.

POOL SOCIAL GROUP

- Anyone who enjoys socializing in and around the pools during the summer is invited to attend a get-together from 4-6 p.m. at SCB on second Monday of each month. Come with your favorite appetizer and or beverage (or nothing) for reunions and conversations. Call Sonya at 203-377-1515 for more information.

QUILTING GROUP

- Village quilters meet at the NCB Card Room on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 10 a.m. to noon.

WRITER'S GROUP

- The Oronoque Village Writer's Group (OVWG) is a group of writers who enjoy the challenges of writing and of sharing their work in a trusted environment. Members commit to attending workshops twice a month in a respectful, supportive and professional environment with hopes of expanding their writing and publishing horizons. Our members include published authors and hobbyists. Our works include essays, memoirs, poems, short stories, treatises, humorous tales, heart-wrenching histories. The group meets on alternate Thursdays at 2 p.m. in the Card Room at SCB. For information, contact Mary von Ziegesar at MvonZ@optonline.net or call 203-767-9760. Proof of vaccination required.

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HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY TO DICK STEELE

Many Oronoque residents know Dick Steele, who lived at the end of South Trail for 30 years. He was a very active member of the OV community, including his many years contributing photos and articles to The Villager.

When The Villager received this notice in late January, Dick was in good health and looking forward to his 100th birthday on Feb. 11.

Dick left Oronoque Village in October 2021 and now lives with his older daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Jeff Lea, at 1380 Fairfield Woods Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-3218. His family encourages friends and former neighbors to drop Dick a line.

On his behalf, his family sends Dick's best wishes to all his neighbors and friends around the community. He has many happy memories of the life he and his wife, Florence, shared at Oronoque.



U.S. Marine veterans and Stratford residents Bob Belmonte, Dick Steele (center) and Don Pavia in a photo from January 2020. The trio was among the veterans who were honored with front-row seats to a Sound Tigers hockey game.

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OV ARTS GUILD TO PRESENT 'BUTTONS: WORKS OF ART IN MINIATURE'

By Barbara Stewart

Did you know that button collecting is one of the oldest and largest organized hobbies in the world? Many great families in Europe, including the Rothschilds and the royal houses, had button collections.

On Wednesday, March 16, at 4 p.m., at the South Clubhouse, Anita Cody will present a fascinating program about her own passion for button collecting, which began in the 1990s. She will display some of her extensive button collection to enhance her PowerPoint presentation.

Anita is past president of the Connecticut State Button Society, sits on its board of directors and is webmaster for its website (www.connecticutstatebuttonssociety.org). She is also a member of the National Button Society.



Originally from New York, Anita graduated from Queens College with a bachelor's degree in fine art and art history and has an master's degree in art history from Columbia University.

Now living in Oronoque Village, she continues her studies as a graduate student at Southern Connecticut University, focusing on metal work. The Arts Guild is happy to have her as an active member on our board of directors.

You are invited, by Anita, to "come and experience the world of buttons from the humble to the fancy, rare and valuable, each one like a tiny work of art worthy of consideration." Appetizers will be served after the presentation.

The lecture is presented by the OV Arts Guild (OVAG).

Members of OVAG attend at no charge; guests pay \$8 at the door. The cost of an annual OVAG membership is \$15 per person and can be paid at the door. Proof of vaccination is required to attend.

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CALENDAR

Dates, times and locations of events are subject to change. To update a Calendar listing, please contact Linda Arvers at larvers@oronoquevillage.com

For the latest on OV news & events, go to www.oronoquevillage.com or OVTV. OVTV is Channel 591 for those with a cable box and Channel 121-591 for those without a box.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

- 10:00 a.m. – Dollcrafters, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Zumba, NCB

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

- 9:30 a.m. – Line Dancing, beginner, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Line Dancing, all levels, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Current Events, SCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Sculpture Class, SCB
- 1:00 p.m. – Gerry's Poker, SCB
- 2:00 p.m. – Movie: *Queen Bees*, SCB
- 5:00 p.m. – Sebastian's Poker, NCB
- 6:00 p.m. – Gerry's Poker, SC

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

- 10:00 a.m. – Village Quilting Group, NCB, C/R

- 10:00 a.m. – Corn Hole, SCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Zumba, NCB
- 10:30 a.m. – Yoga, SCB
- 1:00 p.m. – Informal Artists Group, A/C Rm, SCB
- 7:00 p.m. – Bingo, SCB

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

- 9:00 a.m. – Ping Pong Club, SCB
- 10:30 a.m. – Low-Impact Exercise (Bring Weights), NCB

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19: No events scheduled

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

- 3:00 p.m. – Arts Guild Film Festival, SCB (Sold Out)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Business & Maintenance Offices Are Closed

- 10:30 a.m. – Low-Impact Exercise (Bring Weights), NCB
- 6:00 p.m. – Ping Pong, SCB
- 6:30 p.m. – Drop-in Bridge, NCB

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

- 10:00 a.m. – Dollcrafters, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Zumba, NCB
- 7:00 p.m. – Men's Card Game, SCB

Walking at Night

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LINE OF CREDIT FOR ROAD REPAIR WAS APPROVED DURING SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT MEETING OF VOTERS ON FEB. 1

During the Feb. 1 Special Meeting of Tax District voters, the majority of attendees voted to approve the following ballot question:

"The approval by the taxpayers to authorize the OVTD Board to enter into an agreement with the Milford Bank for a three-year line of credit in an amount up to \$1.25 million at an interest rate not to exceed 3.80 percent for the purpose of completing the Road Resurfacing Project in 3 years or less and with the provision that the loan will be retired within five years after the project ends."

The motion was read by OVTD President Linda Libertino during her opening remarks and seconded by Betty Mulholland. The vote passed with 57 in favor and 2 opposed.

Prior to the voting, Linda Libertino welcomed res-

idents to the meeting and thanked them for attending and "for your interest in this important consideration that we have before us."

She also voiced appreciation as follows:

"I want to extend thanks to the members of the OVTD Board, especially the Roads Committee, chaired by Jonathan Towle, and the members of his committee: Tom Aubin, Pete Penny and Bill Tanski.

"In addition, I want to thank the Finance Committee, chaired by Tom Becker, and its members: Maria Szalontay, Ray Vermette and Jonathan Towle.

"I especially want to thank Fred Rodriguez and Mark Rhatigan for their extremely important contributions in drafting and analyzing all the various details related to this important project."

OV

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23

- 9:30 a.m. – Line Dancing, beginner, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Line Dancing, all levels, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Sculpture Class, SCB, A/C Rm
- 1:00 p.m. – Gerry's Poker, SCB
- 5:00 p.m. – Sebastian's Poker, NCB
- 6:00 p.m. – Gerry's Poker, SCB

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

- 10:00 a.m. – Zumba, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Corn Hole, SCB
- 10:30 a.m. – Yoga, SCB
- 1:00 p.m. – Informal Artists Group, A/C Rm, SCB
- 2:00 p.m. – Writer's Group, SCB

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

- 9:00 a.m. – Ping Pong Club, SCB
- 10:30 a.m. – Ladies Bible Study, NCB, B/R

- 10:30 a.m. – Low-Impact Exercise (Bring Weights), NCB
- 7:00 p.m. – Arts Guild General Meeting, NCB

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26: No events scheduled

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27

- 3:00 p.m. – Arts Guild Film Festival, SCB (Sold Out)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28

- 10:30 a.m. – Low-Impact Exercise (Bring Weights), NCB
- 6:00 p.m. – Ping Pong, SCB
- 6:30 p.m. – Drop-in Bridge, NCB

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

- 10:00 a.m. – Dollcrafters, NCB
- 10:00 a.m. – Zumba, NCB
- 7:00 p.m. – Men's Card Game, NCB

GOLF COURSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

OVCA replaced Oronoque Village Owners Corp., an organization initially created by the developers at the start of the development, to represent the community-wide interests of the unit owners. Each of the 11 districts today encompasses about 85 units, and all 929-unit owners are members of OVCA whose Board of Directors consists of 11 district representatives and four at-large officers who serve as president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer of the Condominium Association.

OVCA became owners of the condominium community's common property together with the buildings and facilities that had been built under 4.1.6.12.4, "Accessory Use" section, of the zoning regulation, except for the north and south community buildings, swimming pools, golf course and clubhouse. Chris Bargas retained the title for himself to the two community buildings and pools and entered into a 99-year rental agreement with each of the 25 neighborhood associations and, later, with OVCA for their use, care and maintenance. Ownership of the clubhouse and the 18-hole golf course surrounding the Village was retained by Chris Bargas and his two partners, who apparently operated the Country Club in a manner to serve their own purposes without recognizing OVCA's interest.

Connecticut's law, Chapter 825, Condominium Act, that regulated at that time the formation and management of condominiums was amended by the state legislature, effective Jan. 1, 1977, to prevent developers from retaining ownership of land parcels and "Accessory Use" amenities built after this date that were approved under the local zoning codes as an integral part of a development.

Relationships among the partners and with the unit owners changed in the early 1980s. On March 26, 1981, Norman Haflich and Thomas White sold their 40 percent ownership interest in the country club to their partner, Chris, and his brother, John Bargas, for \$333,332.00. Chris Bargas also transferred to his brother, John, a 10.2 percent ownership interest in the Village's two community buildings and pools on Aug. 19, 1981. The Bargas family now owned the country club, two community buildings and pools.

During the 1980s, the condo owners' relationship with the Town of Stratford and with the Bargas family became more strained. The unit owners were upset with paying Stratford's property taxes and receiving less Town-supported services than other Stratford residents living in their own private homes. The unit owners were unhappy with OVCA's rental agreement with Chris Bargas for the community buildings

and pools. Many owners were concerned with the way the Country Club was managed and felt it had become a commercial enterprise rather than an integral accessory to the Village. Unit owners complained that they were not granted preferential consideration to use the country club's facilities. Relationships, apparently, worsened after Chris and John Bargas, on Sept. 15, 1983, entered into a 10-year agreement with Joseph Clemente of Milford and Angelo Vincenzo of Shelton to lease the upper floor of the clubhouse. The lease allowed Clemente and Vincenzo to operate a public restaurant, banquet facility and catering services. The Bargas brothers would operate the lower-level golf facilities, locker room, pro shop and offices.

The brothers also provided Clemente and Vincenzo an option to purchase the golf course and clubhouse for \$2,500,000, if exercised by Aug. 31, 1986. After this date, the lessee would have a right of first refusal to a sale of the country club. John Bargas decided to retire to Florida and sold his 47.6 percent share of the Country Club to Chris Bargas for \$1,194,000 on August 27, 1985.



Six Village unit owners, led by Samuel Brotman, initiated a civil lawsuit in 1982 against Chris and John Bargas, and Clemente and Vincenzo for operating the Country Club and restaurant in violation of zoning regulation 4.1.6.12.4 among other sections of the zoning code. OVCA eventually took over as plaintiff and pursued the case in court.

Stratford's Planning and Zoning Commission also was included in the lawsuit for a determination that the country club's restaurant and banquet facilities were operated in a manner that violated the zoning codes. The Zoning Commission upon review agreed with OVCA that the restaurant was being operated as a public business in a RS-1 residential zone and issued a cease-and-desist order.

However, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) later vacated the cease-and-desist order because ZBA believed the decision should be determined in a court of law rather than by the Zoning Board. The unit owners were now more upset because of ZBA's decision. Village residents wanted the restaurant, banquet and catering facilities closed because they were operated as a for-profit business serving mainly non-Village residents, and because the noisy and unruly behavior of some of their customers and loud party music being played outside disturbed nearby unit owners. Many owners met on a Saturday morning in early November 1987 to explore various options; one of them was how Oronoque Village might secede from the Town of Stratford and form a new

Continued on page 16



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GOLF COURSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

town with other nearby condominiums and, possibly, Sikorsky Aircraft.

An article written by Nick Ravo appeared in The New York Times on Nov. 9, 1987, reported how “irked” OV condo owners were at the time with Stratford’s Town government. The subject of secession also was mentioned in a well-recognized history book authored by Lewis Knapp, “Pursuit of Paradise, History of the Town of Stratford, CT,” published in 1989.

After John Bargas sold his interest in the country club to his brother in 1985, Chris Bargas expanded the family ownership to include his two sons, Thomas and James, and several grandchildren. They agreed in early 1988 to sell the clubhouse and golf course to Joseph Clemente and partners, Vincent Sorrentino and Joseph Tartagni. The three had formed a new partnership under the name of CST Realty, the first initials of their last names.

OVCA was concerned with the potential sale and sought out for representation attorney Austin Wolf, founder and principal of the firm Cohen and Wolf. Attorney Wolf had a prestigious and well-respected reputation in Connecticut real estate law. He filed a notice in Superior Court on Feb. 3, 1988, to prevent the sale to CST Realty partners, stating that the agreement was invalid, illegal and unenforceable because it did not comply with the provisions of Stratford’s zoning code 4.1.6.12.15. Attorney Wolf argued that the country club property can only be sold or transferred to OVCA because section 4.1.6.12.15 states that: “All interior streets, sidewalks, utilities, recreation facilities and open space shall be owned and maintained by the applicant, owner or association. Legal documentation, satisfactory to the Town Attorney, shall be submitted assuring the ownership and maintenance of said roads, sidewalks, utilities, recreation facilities and open space.”

The sale, however, took place on April 6, 1988. The 146-acre property — consisting of Oronoque Village clubhouse, golf course and the associated maintenance building described on Map 2142, prepared in December 1977 and filed in Stratford’s Land Records office — was sold for \$3,500,000. The sale agreement contained the provision that it was “subject to restrictions imposed or to be imposed by government authority, including zoning or planning rules and regulations of the City or Town in which the real estate is situated.” The warranty deed was filed in Stratford’s Land Records Office (SLR) book 701, page 651 on Nov. 15, 1988.

Because of OVCA’s pending lawsuit against the new owners and the Bargas family for the sale of the country club, and the possible deed restrictions forthcoming from the Town of Stratford, attorneys for CST Realty entered discussions with Cohen and Wolf attorneys to address OVCA’s many concerns. Over the next three years, the two parties addressed OVCA’s extensive list of issues going back prior to 1980 when the country club was owned by Bargas, Haflich and White, the original developers.

The issues raised in Brotman’s 1982 lawsuit, Stratford’s zoning regulations and restrictions, encroachment of units on country club property, adjustment of golf club boundary lines, easements for OVCA’s use of the guardhouse and access to the Village Directory sign near the South and North Trail entrances, and many other details were addressed and eventually settled. The



Chris Bargas

result of these extensive negotiations was a comprehensive agreement, called “Settlement Agreement”, prepared by OVCA’s attorneys that was signed on Jan. 31, 1992, by then-OVCA President Harry Davis and CST Realty Partners Sorrentino and Tartagni.

A few months later, on March 23, 1992, Chris, Thomas and James Bargas also signed the Settlement Agreement. The provisions and terms of the agreement, containing a comprehensive list of restrictions and covenants on the golf course and clubhouse property, were filed in the Stratford Land Records Office, Book 858, pages 221-253, on May 12, 1992. The covenants and restrictions are now incorporated in the deed for the country club’s land and buildings, and they are binding in perpetuity on all future Oronoque Country Club owners. The 11.7 acres of land used for the driving range are excluded from the restrictions. Finally, after many years of sometime difficult relationship with country club owners, OVCA now had the assurance and security that the clubhouse and golf course would be operated to include the interests of the Oronoque Village unit owners.

A complete copy of the Settlement Agreement is in OVCA’s files. The deeds which owners possess for each individual condo unit also reference the Country Club’s restrictions and covenants. They are summarized below:

Deed Restrictions and Covenants Placed On Oronoque Golf Course and Clubhouse Property

1. The Golf Course property shall be maintained and utilized as a private golf course or as open space in perpetuity and shall not be developed in any manner. No change shall be made to the natural contour of the land
2. No additional buildings or structures may be constructed thereon, or accessory use made of the property without OVCA’s written permission
3. For as long as the golf course is used, the course, clubhouse and maintenance buildings will be maintained consistent with 1991 maintenance practices
4. In the event the property ceases to be used, it shall be maintained by the owner as open space and all the buildings, landscaping, and land maintained as reasonably required by OVCA



5. All buildings and structures shall be maintained, altered, or rebuilt in the architectural style of Oronoque Village and subject to zoning approvals as required
6. No other accessory use facilities or buildings shall be constructed other than for parking and maintenance or with OVCA's approval
7. CST Realty waives any claims against OVCA related to setback requirements and encroachment of OVCA's property
8. All Oronoque Village unit owners and residents are granted free social memberships and are given preferential consideration over other applicants for full Club membership
9. Residents and unit owners have access at their own risk during off hours and non-golf season to cart paths, walkways, and clubhouse parking lots for exercise purposes
10. The clubhouse will be operated as a private membership country club for club members and guests, and all catered affairs are sponsored by club members
11. No more than 125 catered affairs will be scheduled yearly, and a listing of scheduled affairs will be provided quarterly to OVCA
12. CST Realty grants to OVCA an easement for the use and maintenance of the Guardhouse and adjacent parking area and to the land under the Village sign
13. CST Realty grants OVCA a right of first refusal to purchase the Golf Course property
14. The 11.7-acre driving range land is not included in the deed restrictions and covenants
15. CST Realty agrees that the Country Club is an integral part of Oronoque Village open space development to serve primarily the residents thereof
16. CST Realty adjusted the golf course's southside boundaries by conveying to OVCA in a quitclaim deed — dated Nov. 25, 1992 — seven small parcels, totaling about 4.0 acres of land, along Freeman's brook and the course's perimeter. Deed reference SLR 941, 110

CST Realty partnership resolved the problems in favor of OVCA's interests and Stratford's zoning code provisions under which the Oronoque Village development was originally permitted. However, the lawsuit initiated in 1982 by Samuel Brotman et al and later assumed by OVCA in January 1989 against CST Partners and the Bargas family claiming that the golf

course did not serve primarily the residents of the Village; that, its operation violated various sections of the zoning code because the club and restaurant were functioning as a for-profit commercial enterprise in a residential zone; and, that Village residents were excluded from using the dining facilities was still pending in Superior Court in 1994.

Joseph Clemente, by now, had retired to Florida, and the remaining defendants, Sorrentino and Tartagni, petitioned the Court to dismiss the lawsuit after presenting sufficient evidence to convince Judge Eugene Spear of Bridgeport that there was no longer an objection, and the country club now serves primarily the interests of Oronoque Village. The defendants stated that OVCA's initial objections had been resolved satisfactorily. Correspondence to Village unit owners, deed restrictions and covenants filed in the Stratford's Land Office, the "Settlement Agreement," the country club's rules and governing policies and other related data were reviewed by Judge Spear. OVCA submitted no objections to the information or defendants' request for dismissal.

Judge Spear, satisfied with the information, granted the defendants' request, and dismissed the lawsuit on Feb. 17, 1995. Thanks to attorneys at Cohen and Wolf, unit owners today have the peace of mind in knowing that the country club property must be used and maintained in perpetuity as a private country club or as open space land by anyone who owns the property. The deed restrictions and covenants now cause the country club to conform to the intent of Stratford's zoning regulation 4.1.6.12.

Sorrentino and Tartagni sold the golf property, excluding the 11.7 acre driving range, to Oronoque Golf, LLC, in care of Arnold Palmer Management Group (APMG) in Orlando, Fla., on Dec. 3, 1996, for \$3,900,000. The warranty deed was recorded in SLR book 1247, page 135. The deed included all restrictions and covenants negotiated in the 1992 Settlement Agreement, and it references the agreement. These records are all available for online research. The driving range, which had been leased to APMG since 1996, was sold to APMG in February of 2000 for \$600,000.

The total property changed ownership a couple more times during the early 2000s. In October 2014, Oronoque

Continued on next page

SAC'S "WELCOME 2022" OFF-SITE EVENT WAS A SUCCESS

It was an enjoyable evening for all Oronoque residents who attended the Social Activities Committee's "Welcome to 2022 on Jan. 22" event.

Following the OVCA Board's Jan. 18 decision to not allow food or beverage in the North and South Clubhouses for 30 days, event co-chairs Mary Ann Weaver and Sonya DeBiase searched for a suitable venue so they could move this event outside of Oronoque Village.

The Blue Goose in Stratford was able to deliver just what we were looking for. Michael Rea, a local (and legendary) singer, was the entertainer for the night. His performance got everyone in the mood to sing along and get up and dance. We laughed and danced the night away. Isn't that what we all really wanted to do to "Welcome 2022?"

Submitted by Mary Ann Weaver and Sonya DeBiase



SAC Chair Mary Ann Weaver (left), Steven Rea and Sonya DeBiase.



Putting contest at the 2017 OVCA Golf Tournament, held at OCC. Photo taken by Peter Feick.

GOLF COURSE - CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Golf, LLC, was purchased together with 21 other country clubs by C-Bons International Golf Group, CBIGG, located in Texas and owned by C-Bons International Group. C-Bons International is chartered in Hong Kong, and its headquarters and some manufacturing facilities are in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

Oronoque Country Club, as it is now known, reported to corporate managers in Texas. The Town of Stratford in 2020 appraised the country club, including the buildings and the 142 acres of remaining land, at \$2,707,800 which translates to an assessment value of \$1,895,460. At the current mill rate, Stratford collected about \$75,000 in taxes in 2021. In January 2022, C-BIGG sold Oronoque Country Club to Alliance Management located in Farmington, Conn., for about \$800,000.

In addition to the country club's deed restrictions, it may be difficult today for anyone wishing to develop any part of the country club's land to receive approval for a project from Stratford's Zoning Commission. The country club's current

142 acres of land, which includes the 11.7 acre driving range, were an integral part of the total 304.6-acre Oronoque Village condominium project originally submitted to the Zoning Commission for approval. The 142 country club acres were part of the land area used to calculate the Village's density, size and number of dwelling units allowed to be built by the developers, Bargas, Haflich and White, under the 18 subsections of zoning code 4.1.6.12. for a condominium development.

Oronoque Country Club today is privately owned and operated as a for-profit business serving the interest of Village residents and the public who are club members. Its success depends on the area's economy and level of public interest. It was built originally as an amenity for the enjoyment and lifestyle enhancement of Village residents. Although fewer than 10 percent of Village residents are country club members, the surrounding golf course's open land and the availability of social memberships remain important amenities to all residents of Oronoque Village.

OV

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Oronoque Village 50 and Fabulous Gala Is Coming!

*Oronoque Village's 50th Anniversary Gala Celebration
was delayed but not forgotten!*

*Two lovely evenings of friendship, delicious cuisine
and fabulous entertainment will be held on
May 14th and 15th at the South Clubhouse Ballroom.*

*Look for your invitation in your black boxes at the end of
February. Event details and response information will be
in the March 1st edition of The Villager. Reservations will
be taken in the order they are received.*

We can't wait to share this spectacular event with you!



House & Garden Presents

Stratford History



Monday, March 7-2022
1:30 pm - SCB

David Wright, editor of the The Stratford Historical Society Newsletter will share with us some interesting stories about Stratford's past!

David, current Manager of Information Technology for the Town of Stratford, has been researching Stratford's rich history for many years and will share some of his "finds" about our city in a delightful afternoon of town history followed by tea, coffee, and dessert. Don't miss this informative House & Garden event!

Members: Free -
Guests \$2



Vaccination card required



The OV Book Club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the NCB Library.

The book for the March 2 will be *Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano ... a “dazzling” novel that “will break your heart and put it back together again.” This is a story about a young boy who must learn to go on after surviving a devastating tragedy and how he makes an unexpected discovery - one that will lead him to the answers of some of life’s most profound questions.

The book for April 6 will be *Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennet, which is about twin sisters, inseparable as children, who ultimately choose to live in two very different worlds.



Bingo — presented by the OV Men’s Club — takes place on the third Thursday of each month (excluding December).

The next game is February 17 at 7 p.m. at SCB The cost is \$2.50 per card. Games are open to all.

**Questions?
Call Sandy Lunt at 203-377-5833**

**JOIN US FOR
“IT’S 5’OCLOCK SOMEWHERE”
ON THE FIRST FRIDAY
OF THE MONTH
AT NCB at 5 P.M.**

**BYOB * Relax and Mingle *
Drop By With An
Appetizer to Share**

Hosted by SAC

We hope to see you on March 4



WEEKENDERS' ST. PADDY'S DAY CELEBRATION - MARCH 12 AT NCB AT 6 PM

This humorous, high-energy show will you have clapping and singing along in no time, engaging you from the start to finish

Dr. Joe Utterback, a featured jazz artist, will showcase his piano-playing talent, accompanied by the gifted voice of Michael Jovovich. They will perform Irish ballads & American standards.

Dinner includes delicious corned beef sandwiches on rye, coleslaw, potato chips, soda, coffee and dessert.

The price for this event is \$25 per person.

To ensure a seat for what will be a fabulous evening, please deposit your checks — made out to "Weekenders" (with any special seating arrangements attached) — in our box at NCB by March 3.

Vaccination cards required.

Questions? Call Carol at 203-375-2101.



General Meeting & Entertainment by *Michael Coppola and Maria Tiscia* Friday, February 25, 2022 7pm NCB

A true virtuoso, Michael Coppola has recorded seven CDs and played at major music venues, including The Classic American Guitar show, The Philly Guitar Show, The Montreal Jazz Festival and The Chet Atkins Festival in Nashville.

Michael will perform with vocalist Maria Tiscia, who worked in TV and radio doing commercials with the late jazz musician Don Elliot. Through her association with Elliot, she worked on movie scores and projects for Quincy Jones.

General Meeting

We will begin with a brief business meeting and to welcome all our members, new and existing.

We are still collecting annual dues of \$15 pp at the door, or you can put a check in our mailbox in the NCB made out to OVAG.

Members attend our meetings free of charge and guests pay \$8 at the door.

Vaccination Cards Required



Cabaret Style Seating - BYOB and snacks

Questions? Call Barbara Stewart 203.612.1373



FUNSEEKERS

PRESENTS

Brian Kelly: Singer, Pianist, Trumpet Player

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 SCB • Doors Open At 6:15



Brian is a multi-talented musician who has been performing for the past 15 years across New England. Whether its Bach, Sinatra, Motown, R&B, Jimmy Buffet or Ed Sheehan, Brian can perform it all! **Don't miss this wonderful show!**

Reservations required and payments will be accepted from February 16th until date of event unless maximum capacity is reached. Please put \$4.00 per person into FUNSEEKERS box in NCB lobby.

Not a member for 2022? Join or rejoin for \$15 per person. Drop your dues check off in the Funseekers mailbox (Please include your name, phone number and email address).

Only OV resident members and one non-resident guest may attend-guests are \$7.00 pp

Vaccination cards must be shown at the door for entrance
Questions? Call Lucy Clifford 203-644-7710

COFFEE, SOFT DRINKS & DESSERT TO BE SERVED

BYOB AND MUNCHIES!

Oscar winner Ellen Burstyn plays a reluctant new arrival at a retirement home in the new comedy "Queen Bees," and – as the title suggest - she comes face to face with a gang of "mean girls."

But Burstyn's character (Helen) eventually forms a bond with the women -- who include co-stars Ann-Margret, Jane Curtin and Loretta Devine — while also finding romance in the process. James Caan also stars.



The Movie Club Presents
Queen Bees
February 16, 2 pm - SCB

\$1 admission - proof of vaccine & masks required





FUNSEEKERS

EXCITING PLANS FROM YOUR FUNSEEKERS CLUB!

WE INVITE ALL RESIDENTS OF ORONOQUE VILLAGE TO JOIN OR REJOIN FUNSEEKERS AS WE BEGIN OUR 2022 SEASON ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH.

- We meet on the second Tuesday evening of each month at the South Clubhouse and provide a lovely evening of socialization and top notch entertainment. We have a great line-up of entertainers for this season.
- Meet new friends, socialize and enjoy fabulous entertainment each month. Dessert, soft drinks, coffee and tea are always provided.
- We are now collecting membership dues. Annual dues are only \$15 per person. Cost per event is \$4.00 collected with each event reservation.
If you already paid your 2022 dues you are all set!

Kindly fill out the form below. Return with check made out to Funseekers Club and deposit in the Funseekers Mailbox, NCB lobby.

Questions? Call Lucy Clifford,
203-6447710 or
lmclifford@yahoo.com.



We are working on a new database of members' emails so that we may correspond with you efficiently and expediently. Please include your email address below. Thank you. We are anxious to develop this avenue of communication as soon as possible.



NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

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Exclusive Offer for Oronoque Village Residents

\$150 off any NEW Stairlift Purchase*

Call 866-342-4821 (toll free) to redeem this offer.



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*Includes lifetime warranty on motor and drive train. Offer expires April 30, 2022.

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Our friends are here. Our memories are here.

As the world around us changes and challenges us,
Caregiver's Home Solutions can bring you peace of mind.

When illness, injury or age make home life more difficult,
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The way it should be. Always.

Proudly owned by an OV resident, our agency has been
honored to serve the Oronoque community for over 14 years.

Call us today for a no-obligation in-home assessment.
It would be our pleasure to show you how we can
help with a care plan that meets your individual needs
while maintaining your sense of dignity and independence.

+ Special discount for OV residents +

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HOME SOLUTIONS



203-870-9850

