

Dear Seniors,

I hope you are all well and safe. For many people, the social distancing means they will not be able to celebrate their most important holidays. This will be hard, as both Passover and Easter are holidays with deep traditions in family, food and sharing. Check in with your house of worship and see if they are recording services or broadcasting them on you tube or local cable channels. Please resist the temptation to get together in groups to celebrate - we can celebrate remotely for the coming weeks, and will celebrate together when it is safe to do so! As we start Passover and Holy Week, take care of yourself and know that by staying apart, you are taking care of those you love.

Use of Masks and Facial Coverings - From the CDC

As you may have heard, the current recommendation is for people to wear masks or face coverings when out in public. This precaution is in *addition* to social distancing, not instead of. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators - those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Simple cloth face coverings can slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. You can use face coverings you already have at home - bandanas, ski masks, scarves. If you are handy, they can be made from common materials at low cost. See the link below for details. Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

Please note, cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

For details from the CDC about face coverings, go to their website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Access to News from the Village Green

The Village Green, a local, online news source, is offering free access to its COVID-19 news without a subscription. In addition, thanks to the many generous donations through their COVID-19 Local News Fund, they are offering 20 subscriptions for full reporting to SOMA senior citizens. If you are interested, email villagegreennj@gmail.com. This offer will be recognized on a first come-first served basis.

Fitness and exercise

Now more than ever, it's important to stay healthy and get some exercise. See the new page on our website with links to exercise classes - more coming soon!

<https://www.somatwotownsforallages.org/staying-fit-while-staying-home>

The Stimulus Checks *from NJ.com*

Here is some information on the Federal COVID-19 stimulus payments that may start to arrive soon. Please note - there are always scammers trying to take advantage of situations like this. DO NOT give out your information to anyone calling about your stimulus check.

Amounts and eligibility: The full payment amounts are \$1,200 for individuals with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) up to \$75,000, and \$2,400 for married couples who file joint tax returns and have a combined AGI up to \$150,000. These amounts will be reduced by \$5 for every \$100 earned above the thresholds, up to certain limits. People earning over \$99,000 individually, \$199,000 jointly may not receive payment.

How it works: The IRS is using tax returns from 2019, or 2018 for Americans who haven't filed for 2019 yet, to determine eligibility and then directly deposits checks into banking accounts. Most people who qualify won't have to take any additional actions.

Some people aren't typically required to file federal taxes, such as certain low-income Social Security recipients. Initially, the U.S. Treasury and IRS were requiring them to file an abbreviated tax form in order to receive a stimulus check, but after criticism from lawmakers, the agencies reversed course and now payments will automatically be deposited into the bank accounts of Social Security beneficiaries who don't normally file a tax return.

Those who haven't provided banking information to the government have options: The U.S. Treasury announced plans to create a web-based portal for eligible people to enter account numbers. Or they can wait for a conventional check to be sent in the mail.

Updates to the Metropolitan Museum

The SOMA Two Towns for All Ages trip to the Metropolitan Museum on April 30 is cancelled, but the Met has updated its website to allow more virtual viewing and tours:

Main website: <https://www.metmuseum.org>

Tour of the Cloisters:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH10Nv2lniw&list=PL8HAKqKX065Bm4la3BM3C3bSkn-Xxu8Hp&index=2>

Bronx Zoo

The Bronx zoo has gone virtual, including showing off many of the new zoo babies.

<https://bronxzoo.com/>

Nextdoor Help App

If you use the Nextdoor app, you may have noticed the newly added Help Map – an interactive map of your neighborhood where neighbors can mark themselves as someone who can pitch in for neighbors who need help. Take a minute and check out the Nextdoor app and website and see if you want to join: www.nextdoor.com/helpmap

Arts and Culture

Creative people come up with creative solutions. See some great performances, interviews and videos from celebrities:

Stars in the House

Interviews with Seth Rudetsky & James Wesley from their living room with Broadway actors in their homes. (Kristin Chenoweth performed in her bathroom because the accousics were good)

<https://www.starsinthehouse.com/>

SOPAC

When Juilliard@ SOPAC had to cancel the April 5th performance by Mackenzie Melemed, the pianist recorded himself at home. Enjoy his performance here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWFWkxoqIiY&feature=youtu.be&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Juilliard+%40+SOPAC&utm_campaign=email+enews

Playbill.com

Is featrung videos of songs, special zoom performances and recordings of some Broadway classics on its website: <https://www.playbill.com/coronavirusupdate>