

The Gaslight

ISSUE 02
2021

FALL
SOUTH ORANGE
VILLAGE
ACCESS IT ALL



FALL
EDITION

SOUTH ORANGE
VILLAGE HALL CLOCK TOWER
BUILT IN 1895
ARCHITECTS ROSSITER & WRIGHT



WITH
HISTORY



**IN TOUCH WITH
VILLAGE GOVERNMENT**

VILLAGE PRESIDENT

Sheena Collum
973.378.7715 ext 2

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bobby Brown
Donna Coallier
Karen Hartshorn Hilton
Bill Haskins
Summer Jones
Bob Zuckerman
973.378.7715 ext 2

ADMINISTRATOR

Adam Loehner
973.378.7715 ext 2

GENERAL INQUIRIES

973.378.7715

Clerk's Office, ext 1

Building & Code, ext 3

Tax Collector, ext 4

Assessor, ext 5

Finance, ext 6

Engineering & Zoning, ext 7

Parking Authority, ext 2037

Health, ext 7710

Water Service ext 7760

Public Works

973.378.7741

Recreation & Cultural Affairs

973.378.7754

Fire Department

973.762.3200

Library

973.762.0230

Police, nonemergency

973.763.3000

Rescue Squad

973.762.5647

Animal Control

973.377.2296



LETTER FROM THE VILLAGE PRESIDENT



As we say goodbye to summer and look toward the fall and winter months here in South Orange, I'm struck by how eventful our summer has been. Flood's Hill was bursting with activity all summer long. Our weeklong Juneteenth celebration culminated in an unforgettable evening with fireworks. We welcomed the return of our Summer Nights programming, National Night Out, and our first-ever Shakespeare in Our Parks production. None of this would have been possible without our collective efforts to protect ourselves and each other during the Covid-19 pandemic, and I salute you. At the time of this writing in mid-September, 100 percent of residents ages 30 and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine. South Orange has also implemented a mandatory vaccine and testing requirement for our staff. Let's keep up our efforts!

Unfortunately, as we approached Labor Day, we suffered a devastating weather event in Tropical Storm Ida. While we were fortunate that there were no injuries to residents (due in large part to the heroic efforts of our first responders), the damage to various facilities, vehicles, equipment, and roads was significant. The Board of Trustees has authorized an emergency bond ordinance totaling \$5M to begin repair and recovery efforts and have waived all fees for homeowners for construction/tree removal related to the storm. Additionally, we were able to provide an emergency container day and town-wide curbside bulk pickup to help our residents who suffered property damage. As a resident of Essex County, which has received a major disaster declaration, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Please visit disasterassistance.gov to learn more.

Lastly, to end on a high note, I am very proud of the many initiatives advancing throughout town. These include:

- Various redevelopment projects that will generate new revenue, construct inclusionary affordable housing units, offer new retail spaces, upgrade infrastructure, and welcome new neighbors to our community.
- Submission of a fully affordable, 27-unit development proposal to the state for low-income housing tax credits.
- Renovations to the Baird Community Center that will provide a 21st century facility and new field house.
- The unveiling of our South Orange Master Plan, which will be heard by our Planning Board in October.
- The acceptance of a gift – the Father Vincent Monella Center located at 133 Fairview Avenue – which will be the first municipal asset in the Seton Village neighborhood to be used as a community center while adding an acre to our Recreation and Open Space Inventory.

I'm looking forward to the months ahead, and I hope to see you around town celebrating at block parties and supporting our small businesses!

Sheena Collum

Sheena C. Collum
Village President



VILLAGE HIGHLIGHTS



SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE TRUSTEES

Election Night 2021 with outgoing Trustees Steve Schnall and Walter Clark

SOUTH ORANGE WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEES

On May 11, 2021, South Orange Trustee Karen Hartshorn Hilton won a second four-year term on the South Orange Board of Trustees, joined by her running mates Braynard “Bobby” Brown and Bill Haskins. Trustees Brown and Haskins are each serving their first term, replacing outgoing trustees Steve Schnall and Walter Clarke.

Trustee Hilton, during her first 4-year term, devoted herself to the renovation of the Baird Community Center, which was built in 1889; that renovation is currently underway. Hilton has also been instrumental in the planning of the renovation of the Village’s public library space, including the historic Connett Building, built in 1896. Hilton is the chair of the Finance & Capital Projects Committee and serves on the Board of School Estimate, in addition to her other committee assignments. For the last twenty-five years, she has worked with governmental, nonprofit, and political organizations. Hilton and her husband have lived in South Orange for twenty-four years and raised their four children here.

Trustee Haskins is the former chair of the South Orange Environmental Commission and Green Team, where he led a diverse and talented group working on a wide variety of environmental issues and projects in South Orange. He has also volunteered to help many other New Jersey environmental groups. Haskins currently chairs the Public Works and Utilities Committee and is Trustee liaison to the Environmental



SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE TRUSTEES

Trustees Bill Haskins, Karen Hartshorn Hilton, and Bobby Brown

Commission, along with his other assignments. Professionally, Haskins works as a construction project manager. He and his family have lived in South Orange for sixteen years.

Trustee Brown has a history of working to improve diversity and inclusion in South Orange. A longtime leader in local youth recreation, he is working to increase community engagement and equity in Village government, our business community, and community justice programs. Brown currently chairs the South Orange Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee and is the Trustee liaison to the Board of Education and Youthnet, along with his other assignments. Professionally, Brown works in securities litigation, protecting clients in global financial markets, and advocates for civil rights. He and his wife, Emily, have lived in South Orange for thirteen years and are the proud parents of two sons, ages 8 and 10.

SENIOR FREEZE

**Tax relief for qualified seniors
Apply through November 1**

NJ has been expanding the numbers of seniors and disabled homeowners who can qualify for the Senior Freeze tax-relief program. Income-eligible South Orange seniors must enroll by November 1 by completing an annual application available from the South Orange Tax Department at taxcollector@southorange.org.



VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT



VOSE & TAYLOR

This 5-story, mixed-use redevelopment project—comprising 110 apartments (10% affordable), 11,000 square feet of retail space, and 10,000 square feet of office space—will create an exciting and attractive gateway to the heart of our downtown.

The negotiated annual service charge is equal to 10% of the building's annual gross revenue, making this property one of the top 5 revenue generators in South Orange.

The project provides outstanding community benefits, including: the \$1.2-million-dollar land acquisition payment, the \$700,000 contribution for off-site capital improvements, an \$825,000 payment into our affordable housing fund, 10% inclusionary housing and a community retail incubator space for local artists and makers.

Building completion is estimated for spring 2023.

BAIRD COMMUNITY CENTER

The renovation of the Baird Community Center on Mead Street is currently underway. Improvements include roof replacement, repairs and restoration of the building exterior, replacement of the second-story porch, and complete renovation of the building interior. The “new” building will include a community space and café leading to the porch, dance/fitness spaces, art rooms, a multipurpose performance space, a public meeting space and The Pierro Gallery. A 2-story field house addition with a garage, a gymnasium and an event space. Building completion is anticipated for early 2023.

You can find out more about all development and capital projects in South Orange at southorange.org/650/Projects-and-Capital-Projects.



VILLAGERS OF THE MONTH



JUNE 2021 LILY FORMAN

Lily Forman, CHS Class of 2021, toddled into South Orange at age 3. As a teen she led her peers in social change advocacy in the schools, our towns, and throughout New Jersey. She was one of the organizers of a climate-crisis teach-in and became a Board of Education student representative, where she discussed issues and potential solutions with BOE leadership. Forman is headed to Stanford this fall. She reminds students to “Use your voice! If there's something you see that you want changed, tell someone and take action.”



APRIL 2021 Dr. Hugh Snyder

Dr. Hugh Snyder and his family have been residents in South Orange for over 16 years. Snyder is dedicated to health and wellness for our community. In 2015, in partnership with the South Orange Recreation Department, he created a program called SoFit. The program focused on a healthy start to the new year. It later expanded to Maplewood, as well. In 2018, Snyder suffered a stroke that changed his life. However, he did not let the stroke stop him. He worked hard on his recovery and continues to serve the community. He has documented this progress in an article in Matter's Magazine called “Resilience in Recovery.”



MAY 2021 Lorraine Graves

Lorraine Graves has lived in the Tuxedo Park neighborhood for almost 40 years. She has spent much of that time volunteering within our community, including as neighborhood association president and as a member of the South Orange Environmental Commission. Graves, a staunch environmentalist, helped establish the SOMa Repair Café. This program provides free repair services, allowing items to be reused and keeping them out of the landfills. This community program, with its zero-waste goal, also helps to involve seniors in our community as volunteer repairers.

Villagers of the Month are nominated by the community for their extraordinary dedication to South Orange. The Community Relations Committee, which is the Village's longest-running advisory committee, selects the awardees. To nominate a Villager of the Month, please visit the South Orange website at southorange.org/756/Villager-of-the-Month.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES INITIATIVES



JOINT FIRE SERVICES

On July 26, the South Orange Board of Trustees and the Maplewood Township Committee held a community forum on fire services, led by Dr. Charles Jennings, principal of Manitou Inc.

After a comprehensive review of calls for service and operational efficiencies of the South Orange and Maplewood fire departments, Dr. Jennings recommended consolidating the two entities into a single fire department. Doing so would result in the following improvements to public safety:

- More effective initial attack to suppress fires and make rescues.
- Greater firefighter safety by having backup personnel available immediately.
- Improved response times, as all equipment and apparatus would be in service and immediate response would be provided from the closest station.
- Improved administration, training, and efficiency by using best practices from both agencies.
- Unified dispatch for safer, more effective operations.
- **No reductions** in firefighting line personnel, though taxpayer savings would be achieved through the reduction of redundant management and supervision, specifically one fire chief and four deputy chiefs, reducing the combined department total from 76 to 71 through attrition.

A financial analysis undertaken by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, which was also presented at the forum, estimated \$1.6 million in annual savings.

Nicolas Platt and Jordan Glatt, New Jersey's shared service czars, were in attendance and are fully supportive of the plan. They said they felt that the recommendations would enhance public safety operations while achieving both savings and cost avoidances for taxpayers. "This is one of the more complex shared service agreements and will be the first of its kind since we were appointed in May of 2018," they noted in a statement. "We are grateful to have been part of this process, look forward to the implementation phase, and are confident these efforts will not only better serve the South Orange and Maplewood communities but will also become a model throughout the state."

To view the final presentation, watch the community forum, and download Manitou's original report and supplemental report, please visit southorange.org.

Questions and comments can be emailed to jointfireservices@southorange.org.



SOUTH ORANGE & MAPLEWOOD FIRE SERVICES

COMMUNITY UPDATE



SOUTH ORANGE COMMUNITY BOARD

On April 14, we held the first meeting of the newly formed South Orange Community Board. Based on his experience with community boards in New York City, Trustee Bob Zuckerman worked to establish this new board in order to provide a structured forum for neighborhood representatives and Village officials to exchange ideas and information to help solve local and regional issues. The Board of Trustees believes that this new board, which initially will meet on a quarterly basis, provides the framework for greatly improving communication between the township and its residents. The board is intended to provide a voice and vehicle for Village neighborhoods, individually or collectively, concerning issues such as transportation, environment, seniors, youths (non-school district related), recreation, public safety, economic development, code enforcement, quality-of-life concerns, health, community engagement, parking, race relations, LGBTQ, finance, and taxes. The neighborhood representatives on the Community Board will report issues and concerns to the governing body and the Department of Administration, and they will be responsible for reporting back to their respective neighborhoods.

Wondering about your neighborhood association and community board representatives? Find out more at southorange.org/358/Neighborhoods.

S&P GLOBAL ISSUES 'POSITIVE' OUTLOOK ON SOUTH ORANGE

Karen Hartshorn Hilton, Village Trustee and chair of the South Orange Village Finance Committee, announced that S&P Global Ratings had revised its outlook for South Orange from "stable" to "positive." "This is great news for our taxpayers," said Hartshorn Hilton, "as this improved credit rating puts us in a strong position for funding our capital projects." According to S&P, "The positive outlook reflects that we believe there is at least a one-in-three chance we could further raise the rating during the next two years if South Orange continues to produce positive results, leading to growth in available reserves." S&P applauded the Village's "strong operating performance in 2020 despite the pressure imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic" and noted that "South Orange anticipates meeting its fund balance target for the first time since its introduction." S&P stated that "management's emphasis on building reserves through conservative budgeting increased its flexibility to withstand potential adverse operating conditions. Through the cuts and changes in its 2020 budget, South Orange maintains strong performance. Furthermore, moving forward, we anticipate additional tax-base growth as several residential projects are ongoing, which should provide additional tax-base growth over the outlook period."

S&P is a leading provider of transparent and independent credit ratings worldwide. The S&P report created for South Orange Village is available online at southorange.org.

DIGITAL VIDEO SYSTEM

Our Digital Video System (DVS) is a combination of hardwired and wireless video systems used by our Village for public-safety purposes. Incidents that might entail DVS use include but are not limited to crimes, motor vehicle crashes, missing persons searches and law enforcement conduct complaints. In July, Trustee Donna Coalier, Health & Public Safety Committee chair, created a community survey and led a community discussion about the DVS. Both were designed to inform a policy review on the use of these cameras. Further camera purchases have been paused until the Board of Trustees is able to review and modify the policies that govern how DVS equipment is purchased and deployed. Anyone wishing to learn more can watch a video of the community discussion and read our DVS FAQs here: southorange.org/838/Digital-Video-System.

RECREATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS



PROGRAMS

Typically, registration for indoor programming starts in October and registration for the ski program starts in November. Currently, all registration is on hold, pending facility availability and state of New Jersey COVID-19 guidelines.

Sign up for notifications of open registration for fall sports at <https://www.southorange.org/610/SO-Alerts>Recreation>.

TYPICAL FALL AND WINTER PROGRAMMING INCLUDES:

- South Orange travel basketball (indoor).
- South Orange recreation basketball (indoor).
- Indoor futsal.
- Open gym for basketball.
- Learn-to-ski program.
- Indoor adult soccer.



2021

Once again, we say goodbye to summer in South Orange. This year, at least, we can look back to fun-filled days and nights, with residents enjoying arts and community in the Village.

CHS Performs Matilda on Flood's Hill



South Orange celebrates Sgt Sally Reaves



MEADOWLAND PARK CONSERVANCY

The Meadowland Park Conservancy (MPC) is about to celebrate its first full year as champion and steward of South Orange's largest and most-visited park. The growing nonprofit is run by volunteers and partners with South Orange Village on everything from events to horticulture strategy and long-term planning. Its vision is to ensure that Meadowland Park is a 12-month destination that will become a premier public space. Favorite events in year one included celebrations of National Puppy Day, National Scavenger Hunt Day, National Pretzel Day and National New Jersey Day, at which attendees formed the outline of our favorite state on Flood's Hill.

The MPC is also working with the South Orange Environmental Commission on the future of the pond, the Rahway River, and ecology throughout the 45-acre park. You can learn more about the MPC, sign up for its quarterly newsletter, and support the park as an MPC member at www.meadowlandpark.org.



VILLAGE HAPPENINGS

SOPAC

This fall, the South Orange Performing Arts Center fully reopens. SOPAC's 2021-2022 season is its most diverse and inclusive yet, featuring an Israeli superstar, a social justice-focus quartet, various Celtic groups, and a bayou-

HURRICANE IDA UPDATE
As many of you know, SOPAC and the surrounding downtown area experienced extensive damage from flooding. Please check the SOPAC website for scheduling updates as they work through recovery and remediation. In the meantime, Laughs in the Loft, the The Herb + Milly Iris Gallery and The Village Cinemas at SOPAC are open and operating.

VISIT: www.sopacnow.org/events/ to purchase tickets.

At this time, all SOPAC patrons are required to show proof of vaccination, negative COVID-19 test results, and current COVID-19 symptoms and a fever within 72 hours of arrival at SOPAC.

Upcoming performances include:

November 6
SOPAC Gala featuring Michael Feinstein

November 12
Joan Osborne

November 13
"The Last Waltz" celebration featuring The Band

November 19
Max Weinberg's Jukebox

November 20
Giants of Jazz

December 2
Nefesh Mountain Hanukkah holiday concert



December 3
Sons of Serendip

December 5
"A Rockapella Holiday"

December 9
Martin Sexton

December 10
KT Tunstall

December 11
Terri Lyne Carrington and Social Science

December 12
We Banjo 3
A Winter Wonderful

December 16
Hot Sardines Holiday Stomp

December 19
Cherish the Ladies: Celtic Christmas



KEY DATES

Tue, October 12
Last day to register to vote

Mon, October 25
Leaf collection begins

Tue, October 26
Last day to apply by mail for a vote-by-mail ballot

Sat, October 16,
1-4 pm: Repair Café at
106 Burnett Avenue,
Maplewood

Tue, November 2
Election Day

Wed, December 8
Leaf collection ends

Dates and times are subject to change; visit southorange.org for confirmation.



SOUTH ORANGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Over the last few weeks some great events have transpired at South Orange Public Library (SOPL). The Village appointed a new library director, Essex County resident Jill Faherty, for the first time in 18 years. The library also made headlines when Teen Services librarian Keisha Miller was recognized as New Jersey Librarian of the Year!

"One of my primary goals is to focus on the expansion plan of the library," said Faherty. "The library board and staff are fantastic, and we all see the potential of what the library can offer the community with more space, modern technology, and expanded remote and in-person services. We were just awarded an ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] grant to support community connectivity to information. This is a great step in the right direction in supporting patrons with electronic resources. It is a catalyst for positive changes to come."

Faherty has more than 25 years of public library and administrative experience. Most recently, she played a key role in creating an assessment tool that supports inclusive collection development. She has worked at the Montclair and New York public libraries, and at book vendor Baker & Taylor, which enabled her to support public libraries throughout the country with programming, author and book events, outreach and makerspaces.

Librarian of the Year Keisha Miller, who has worked at SOPL for 23 years, says,

has been with great pleasure and, above all, rewarding. To be recognized as the NJ Librarian of the Year came as a surprise to me, because as I've always said the work I do is effortless. I wholeheartedly enjoy being a professional librarian. My work with the community and my peers supports my belief in that libraries are the one democratic place that provides access, resources, information regardless of who you are or where you live or go to school. I look forward to using this platform to continue sharing the importance of libraries, and particularly the mission and vision of SOPL as we look ahead towards the future."

"To me, South Orange has always represented a cohesive community that supports all of its residents with great education, recreation, and resources," observed Faherty. "I plan to expand SOPL's role as a vital community center of SOMa, offering inclusive programs, information, and services." As the Maplewood Public Library undergoes construction, Faherty, along with directors of other local libraries, has assured the community that she would provide support to Maplewood patrons as needed.

The librarians are looking forward to the library being open seven days a week, to offering expanded and diverse services for all ages, and to seeing patrons both in the library and remotely this fall.

Visit sopl.org for more information.



VILLAGE NEWS



WE'RE BACK TO THE MOVIES

In July we welcomed Cinema Lab's The Village Cinemas at SOPAC to South Orange. The South Orange community had been without a movie theater since November 2020. Cinema Lab, along with the SOPAC team, is bringing the movies back to South Orange and promises an upgraded moviegoing experience, with a slate of the latest studio, independent and blockbuster films—from small, midsize, and major studios—as well as independent and documentary series and conversations with filmmakers. Upon renovations expected later in 2021, The Village Cinemas at SOPAC will offer five screens with plush seating, an updated lobby, and a technology-first environment. Guests can purchase tickets online, choose their seats in advance, and, in the near future, will be able to preorder concessions—both traditional and from an expanded menu of hot and cold items. Tickets can be purchased online at cinemalab.com.

VILLAGE SPOTLIGHT

SOMA TV

SOMAtv is our local public-access television station, serving the SOMA



community. A winner of the JAG Award of Excellence for its *Get Out the Vote* series, SOMAtv has been a consistent presence within our community since the 1990s. Led by station manager Dustin Dumas, SOMAtv serves the community by providing local access to government and educational programming. SOMAtv shows have been picked up more than 150 times by television stations across the United States and air on 36 stations in 12 states—a testament to the content and production quality of these programs. In South Orange, SOMAtv is broadcast on Cablevision Channel 19 and on FIOS channels 22 and 44.

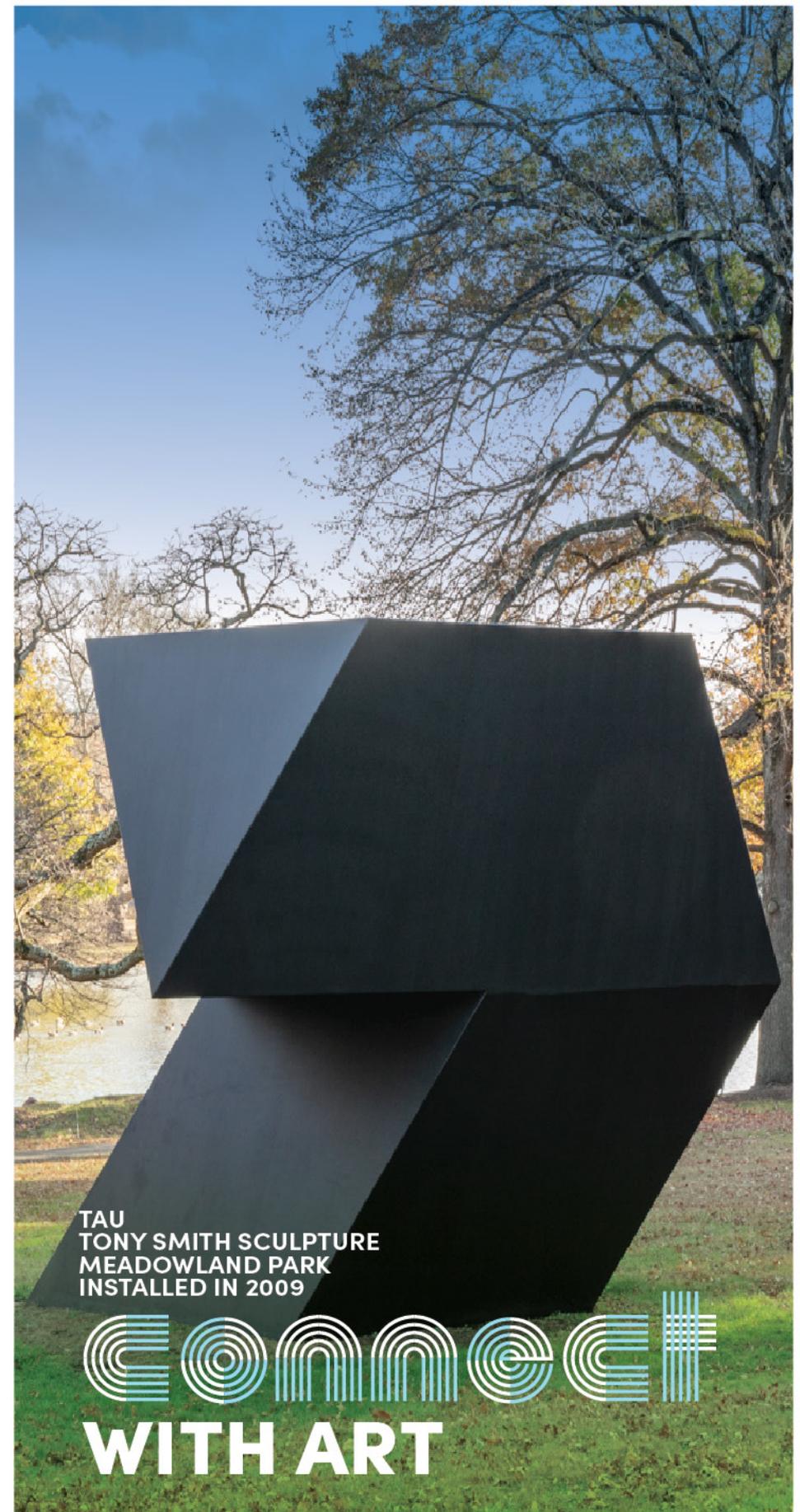
UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTION

The 2021 New Jersey general election will take place on November 2, 2021. The South Orange clerk's office is available to help with questions related to elections. Please reach out to 973-378-7715, ext. 1, or email the clerk's office at clerksoffice@southorange.org.

Some key information for the election:

- Register to vote by Tuesday, October 12. If you'd like to vote by mail, apply by October 26.
- Essex County Ballot Drop boxes will be located on Sloan Street under the gazebo and at Seton Hall University in front of Duffy Hall.
- If you are unsure of your voting district, please contact the clerk's office.

South Orange needs poll workers for the upcoming elections. If interested, please contact the clerk's office.





EMERGENCY ALERTS



ALERTS & NOTIFICATIONS SIGN-UP:
www.southorange.org/610/SO-Alerts

Municipal Offices
76 South Orange Ave
Suite 302
South Orange
New Jersey 07079

Are you receiving emergency alerts and nonemergency notifications? Communication is key, whether it be during a global pandemic, for a severe weather event, or for a street closure. When you create an account, you decide how you would like to be contacted.



FROM THE SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

South Orange got 101 new trees this past spring—sixty-four from a grant awarded to the South Orange Environmental Commission (SOEC) and another thirty-seven from Essex County—in response to dramatic historical canopy loss and current loss due to the emerald ash borer. In collaboration with the New Jersey Tree Foundation, the SOEC will plant 110 additional new public trees this fall.

Visit the SOEC blog for more information, surveys and available downloads such as a new tree guide to help homeowners choose the right trees for their space and the new South Orange ECO-GUIDE is designed to help all residents contribute to the sustainability of our community.

<https://sogreenteam.wordpress.com/>.

Village website: southorange.org

Join our mailing list for updates