

Country Village News

November 2024

250 Theodore Drive, Coram, NY 11727

Happy Birthday



08 Rose Crescimanno
14 Anne Silvestro
22 Joseph Clifford

28 Elaine Pacifico
Joan Farrell
Agnes Ingolia

Anna Silvestro



Happy Anniversary



November is all about gratitude and reflection, with Thanksgiving taking center stage. But did you know there are plenty of other fun and unique November holidays to celebrate throughout the month?

For instance, November is home to National Cinnamon Day, Hug a Bear Day (how sweet!) and even World Pianist Day. And coffee lovers, rejoice—National Cappuccino Day is another November highlight! These are just a few of the quirky, joyful celebrations you can add to your calendar for November.

So, keep reading to discover more! We're diving into all the daily, weekly and monthly November holidays you won't want to miss this year and beyond!

Thanksgiving on Nov. 28 is the centerpiece of November, a cherished time for sharing gratitude, heartwarming quotes and gathering with family. Yet, it's also a day of reflection—a National Day of Mourning to honor the loss of land, culture and lives due to colonization, a reminder of the history that often goes unspoken.

Nov. 5, 2024, brings another significant moment: Election Day. Though not a holiday, it's an important civic duty, especially in this year's presidential race. So, make sure you make time to vote.

And, of course, we can't forget to honor our military veterans on Veterans Day (Nov. 11) and Black Friday on Nov. 29—the unofficial kickoff to the holiday shopping season!

November is rich with religious celebrations! It all begins on Nov. 1 with the Catholic holiday All Saints' Day, a time to honor the holy men and women who have been canonized as saints in the Church.

Right alongside it, we have the vibrant five-day Hindu festival of Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights. In 2024, Diwali kicks off on Oct. 31 and continues through Nov. 4. During this time, celebrants fill their homes and hearts with the glow of lamps, fireworks and joyous celebrations. It's a month full of reflection, gratitude and light!

November Observes

- American Diabetes Month
- Aviation History Month
- Banana Pudding Lovers Month
- Bereaved Siblings Month, Worldwide
- Diabetic Eye Disease Month
- Eye Donation Month
- Movember
- National Adoption Month
- National Epilepsy Awareness Month
- National Family Caregivers Month
- National Georgia Pecan Month
- National Inspirational Role Models Month
- National Long-Term Care Awareness Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- National Marrow Awareness Month
- National Memoir Writing Month
- National Native-American Heritage Month
- National Novel Writing Month
- National Runaway Prevention Month
- Peanut Butter Lovers' Month
- Picture Book Month
- Prematurity Awareness Month
- Vegan Month

26 Fun Facts About November | Time to Be Amazed (2024 Facts)

By Site Staff / August 2, 2023 / 12 minutes of reading

Ever wonder about November's hidden secrets? This often overlooked month, sandwiched between the vibrant fall and icy winter, has more to offer than just short, chilly days.

Join us for an exciting trip filled with fun facts about November. We'll walk you through a timeline filled with surprising facts. From historical events to unique traditions, and even some natural phenomena, November is brimming with excitement.

So why not cozy up and stick around? We promise you're in for a treat that will not only entertain but might also transform the way you see this cool, comfortable time of the year.

1. November is the 11th month of the year in the Gregorian calendar.
2. The name November comes from the Latin word novem, which means nine.
3. In the US, November is National Novel Writing Month, often shortened to NaNoWriMo.
4. November has two birthstones, Topaz and Citrine.
5. The flower of November is the chrysanthemum, symbolizing optimism and joy.
6. In the US, Thanksgiving is observed on the fourth Thursday of November.
7. Scorpio and Sagittarius are the astrological signs for November.
8. The largest diamond ever, the Cullinan Diamond, was discovered in South Africa on November 26th, 1905.
9. Armistice Day, which marks the end of World War I, is commemorated on November 11th.
10. November hosts Black Friday, one of the year's biggest shopping days.
11. November 19th is celebrated as International Men's Day.
12. World Diabetes Day is observed on November 14th.
13. November 20th is celebrated as Universal Children's Day.
14. November is the birth month of several Hollywood heavyweights.
15. Microsoft released the popular gaming console Xbox 360 on November 22nd, 2005.
16. The first Harry Potter movie premiered on November 14, 2001.
17. November 13th is World Kindness Day.
18. The United Nations International Day for Eliminating Violence Against Women is on November 25th.
19. Australia celebrates Melbourne Cup Day, a famous horse race, on the first Tuesday of November.
20. William Shakespeare's romantic comedy, Twelfth Night, was first performed on November 2nd, 1601.
21. November 26th is celebrated as National Cake Day in the U.S.
22. November 14th is celebrated as Operating Room Nurse Day in the U.S.
23. November 28th is known as French Toast Day in the U.S.
24. Albert Einstein presented his quantum theory of light on November 14th, 1908.
25. The first human-made object, Luna 2, landed on the moon in November 1959.
26. The Ford Model T's production ended in November 1927.

PMI Gold Coast Properties

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COUNTRY VILLAGE NEWS

Enjoy Our Community

Times of events are located on the back calendar page of the newsletter.

- Monday – Mexican Train Domino's, Woman Cards, Exercise "Wall Away the Pounds", and Bunco 2nd Monday of each month.
- Tuesday -
- Wednesday –Knitting Group, Ladies Game Day, Bingo
- Thursday – Men's Club, Chair Yoga and Mahjongg
- Friday - 3rd Friday of the month Left Right Center (unless there is an event on Saturday)

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS:

- Veterans Day
- Golden Girls Mystery Birthday Bash
- Halloween Party
- Halloween Dog Parade
- New Zealand airport caps goodbye hugs to 3 minutes to avoid traffic jams
- Kindness Korner
- Get together at Texas Roadhouse with Debbie Dougherty
- Identity Theft, Fraud and Scams
- At Capacity

New Advertisements:

- Marlin Insurance
- Long Island Senior Services Medicare

No longer advertising:

- Goomba Johnny's Pizza
- DJ Henry / Henry's Salon

TDhe CVE Boards Corner

Board members will be in the clubhouse on the **first Saturday** of each month from **9am-10am**, for any homeowner who would like to express an issue.

Entertainment Committee Future Events:

- | | | |
|------------|------------------|--------------------|
| • December | Holiday Party | December 13 at 6pm |
| • February | Horse Racing | TBD |
| • March | Breakfast | TBD |
| • April | Chinese Luncheon | TBD |
| • May | Tea Party | TBD |
| • June | Italian Night | June 7 |

COUNTRY VILLAGE NEWS

WHEN YOUR DOG URINATES:

WHEN YOU WALK AROUND THE CIRCLE YOU CAN SEE ON THE STRIP OF GRASS WHERE THE DOGS ARE UNINATING, THE UNSIGHTLY BROWN SPOTS.

IT IS REQUIRED FOR EVERY DOG OWNER IN THIS COMMUNITY AND THEIR GUEST TO POUR WATER AFTER YOUR DOG URINATES, FEMALE & MALE DOGS.

HEALTH And WELLNESS

This month we will read about Memory, At Capacity.

BINGO

Bingo is every Wednesday at 7:00 pm.

We would love more people to join in the fun, the more people the bigger the pot. So, if you do not have anything to do on Wednesday come down to Bingo, we would enjoy seeing you.

BUNCO

2nd Monday (July 8th) of the month at 7:00pm, please arrive at 6:50. We need twelve people to have a game, but we always would love more. It's open to men and women, we did have a few men join the game last month and they loved it.

If you are interested call Linda Bily (631) 721-5280. The regulars if you cannot make the game, PLEASE call Linda Bily.

Mahjongg:

Mahjongg starts 7:00p at the clubhouse. We have a fun time; we are not at a professional level so no need to hesitate to join in. If interested in learning how to play, please reach out to Doreen McCrystal, 917-270-0426 or Sandy Bakofen (631) 745-6152.

Donations

Please help our local community, we are still in need of your support, which is always appreciated, nonperishables can be left at the club house in the lobby.

Supporting Our Advertisers

The newsletter would not be possible without our advertisers. **When you do patronize our advertisers, please remember to tell them you are from Country Village Estates.** They have been loyal to us so let us reciprocate our patronage. If anyone has information regarding someone who is interested in advertising with us, please reach out to me, Doreen McCrystal, cvenews@yahoo.com

CVE BOARD CORNER

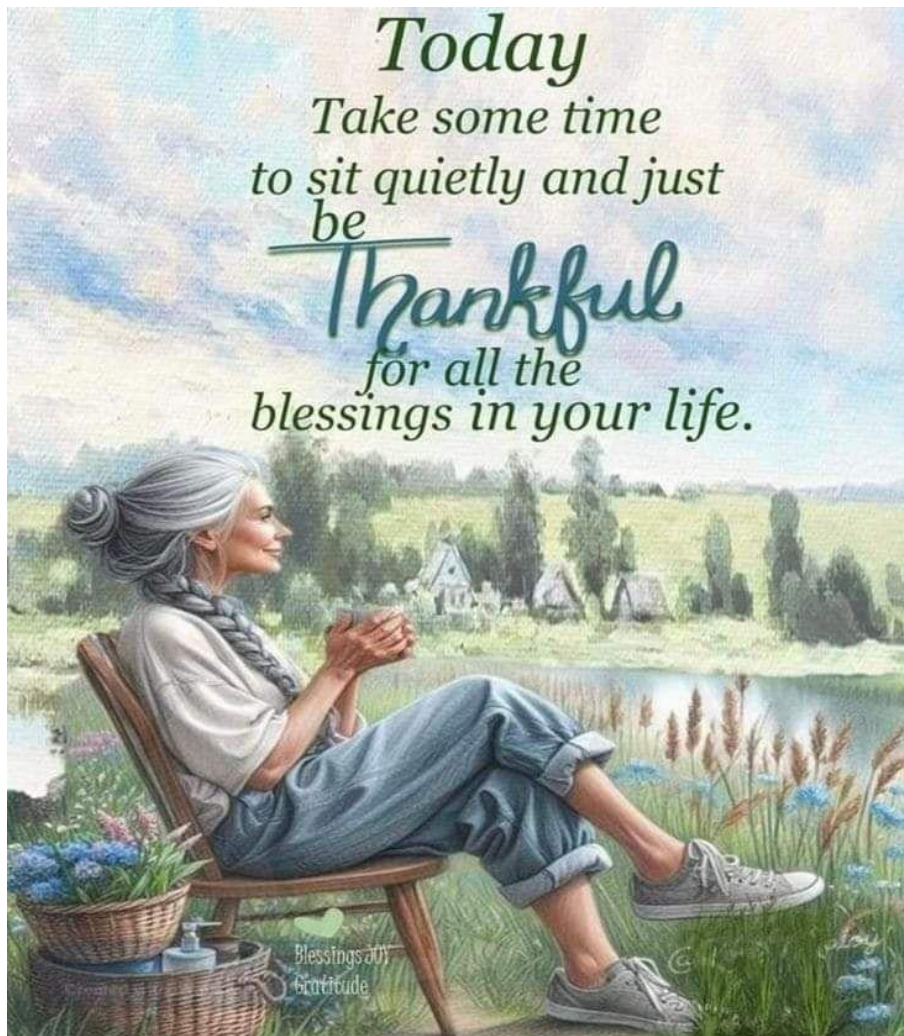
OCTOBER

This Boards corner is to keep you updated on all the things that are being done in Country Village monthly.

- Just a reminder that the Board Meet continues the first Saturday of each month between 9am - 10 am. Our next meet is November 2nd, when 2 Board members will be present to answer any questions or concerns.
- We were inundated with Lantern flies in September and had 2 sprayings, one in September and October. The last spray will be a dormant oil spray in November to try and prevent their return next year.
- We began a drainage project this past month in Country Village. The first area to have these French drains installed was at the tennis & bocce courts. Strangely enough there hasn't been much rain but we know that the 5-7 areas in need of improved drainage will be completed over the next few months.
- The Bocce court's rejuvenating process was started on October 14th and completed by October 24th. They turned out to be a beautiful addition. We thank the members of the finance committee who oversaw this project on a daily basis.
- Signage around Country Village which identifies the buildings and the homes in each unit were replaced on October 17th. We have gotten very positive feedback that they are more visible during the day as well as at night with the reflective numbers on these signs.
- The finance committee continues to work on solar lighting for the areas of courtyards that are extremely dark. They are working on two courtyards first and if successful they will extend it to other courtyards.
- Brookhaven Irrigation shut down our sprinkler system on October 14th.
- Surveillance cameras were installed around the clubhouse and pool area in the first week of October. They certainly will be an added surveillance security, for homeowners' safety.
- On October 21st we had our Community Meeting with voting on the added amendment to our bylaws to build 14 additional homes. 66 2/3% was needed to pass this amendment and we received 134 yes votes and 5 no votes. The amendment passed and we are waiting for Dymond Industries to present all approved permits, approvals and plans to our lawyers. As soon as this is done, we will get a site plan and will post it in the clubhouse.
- Two new American flags were purchased, and it seems that these are needed every 6 months as the wind and weather makes them look tattered. We feel it's important to do this and respect our flag.

CVE BOARDS CORNER

- Fire hydrants have passed the annual inspection.
- One of the Board members was able to get daily police patrol throughout our property. We are certainly grateful to have these extra police presence.
- Recently there were political papers placed on homeowner's patios and some of these solicitors may have even knocked on some doors. We do NOT permit any type of solicitation here. We do not know how these individuals entered but you have a right to tell them they are trespassing on private property and even call the sixth precinct. We do have signs posted at the entrance stating there is **no** soliciting permitted.
- Please keep in mind that you should not put out food for Ferrel cats as it can attract raccoons and other types of rodents. It was also advised by pest control that bird feeders should be away from your homes and not in your patio areas.



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

VETERANS DAY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



NOVEMBER 11, 2024, at 11:00am

Come down to the clubhouse to honor our veterans.

Afterwards there will be bagels, donuts, coffee and tea.





NOVEMBER 16, 2024 @ 1:00pm

Signup sheet in clubhouse for individual help with your cell phone or tablet.

Boy Scout project will be helping you out, this is one of their projects.

Amaze your kids and grandkids when you can text, send photos, add emojis and turn yourself into a creature on FaceTime.

They will help you with whatever you want to learn.



BROADWAY ENTERTAINMENT COMES TO THE VILLAGE

TV'S GOLDEN GIRLS MYSTERY BIRTHDAY BASH

After Sophia hit a jackpot at the casino, she decided to throw her pussycat a surprise birthday bash.

Wanting to be sure that her daughter had a date to her own party, Sophia arranged to have a dating game here tonight. Men, beware, you may become one of the contestants AND Blanche is also on the prowl. The hilarity ensues when Dorothy's ex, Phil, among other ex-boyfriends, show up as well. Will Phi survive the night? If not, the ladies will need to help solve the crime! Come on down to find out! The fun escalates to new levels with our audience participation!

HOMEOWNERS AND GUESTS ARE WELCOME!

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 7PM

\$25 PER PERSON (CASH PLEASE)

50/50 RAFFLE

**COFFEE, TEA, WATER, SODA & DESSERTS.
BYOB AND ANY SNACKS YOU'D LIKE!**

**MONEY TO BE COLLECTED AT THE CLUBHOUSE:
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 10-11 & 6-7**

**SIGN UP SHEET
LOCATED IN THE
CLUB HOUSE.**





HOLIDAY PARTY, TREE & MENORAH LIGHTING

**Join us for a festive evening
on
Friday, December 13, 2024, at 6:00pm**

**Enjoy free wine and cheese, hero sandwiches,
soda & water
50/50 raffle
RESIDENTS ONLY**

**You must sign up by December 6 so that we
can order enough food for everyone. Sign-up
sheet is in the Clubhouse.**

Bring a new, unwrapped toy

HALLOWEEN PARTY

OCTOBER 19, 2024

The Halloween party was a success. There were so many people dressed this year. I think we had 14 people. We had best costumes, 1st place was Cave Man and Woman, Lillo DeMaria and Kelly Marrero and 2nd place was the Cheeta, Cathy Tomaiuolo, they all looked fabulous. Kudos to the Entertainment Committee for doing a fabulous job.















HALLOWEEN DOG PARAD

It was a beautiful day, sun shining a little nip in the air and our pups enjoying eating all those treats. Thank you to all who came out this their pups and all the people who came out to see them.







New Zealand airport caps goodbye hugs to 3 minutes to avoid traffic jams

Story by Rachel Pannett



WELLINGTON, New Zealand — An airport at the bottom of New Zealand’s South Island has found itself at the center of a polarizing debate after introducing a time limit on hugs in its drop-off zone.

Just how long is too long to hug?

Three minutes — the new Dunedin Airport limit — is ample time to activate the happy hormones generated by a good hug, the airport’s chief executive, Dan De Bono, said in a phone interview on Tuesday.

To prove the point, the 40-year-old Dunedin native said he had timed himself earlier that day, going the full quota in front of an audience of airport staff. The hug became a little awkward after 20 seconds, he said, and he resisted the urge to pull away: “I’m not a big hugger. Twenty seconds tops for me.”

Dunedin, with its stone castle and frigid winters, is colloquially known as the Edinburgh of the south. Unlike their Scottish forebears, today’s residents are generally less resistant to physical displays of affection and offer a “warm southern welcome” to visitors taking in the country’s natural beauty spots, De Bono said.

The airport, serving a university town of some 135,000 people, is no match for Los Angeles International or John F. Kennedy International airports. It attracts fewer than 1 million passengers a year, compared to tens of millions at America’s busiest airports.

But traffic can still pile up at peak times, according to De Bono. Airport staff hatched the hug-limit plan as a fun way to reinforce safety in the drop-off zone — avoiding dangerous maneuvers as people grew frustrated with traffic pileups.

The early reactions were mostly negative — with some describing the move as inhumane. Now, De Bono said, the pushback is softening as the story has gone viral in world media, with many pointing out that three minutes is generous by global standards.

“You get 3 minutes to hug?? In America, they don’t even want you to stop. Just come to a slow roll and push your passenger out. I’m serious,” one user wrote on social media.

New Zealand airport caps goodbye hugs to 3 minutes to avoid traffic jams cont.

Another noted that in the United Kingdom, some airports levy large fines for stopping even briefly in the drop-off area. De Bono, a trained pilot, recalled being approached by an official with a whistle at the curb at one U.S. airport.

De Bono said Dunedin Airport has no plans to strictly enforce the time limit — although he joked about deploying “hug police” with their minute-timers out to “hold people to account.”

For those needing longer embraces, there is always the car park, De Bono said. A sign in the drop zone informs visitors to use this for “fonder farewells.” And to be clear, he said, hugs are uncapped inside the terminal.

De Bono admits that three minutes is not the world’s most generous hug limit. Nice airport in France has a five minute “Kiss and Fly” park, which he said was “typical of the French.” During off-peak times, the airport would turn a blind eye to overstayers in the drop-off area. “Between flights, you could have a 20-minute hug, and no one is going to notice,” De Bono said.



COMMUNITY KINDNESS KORNER

Lately, I've found myself drifting away from activities and conversations that once held my interest. There's a growing fatigue in engaging with arguments and conflicts that seem increasingly pointless. It's as if I'm looking for peace and clarity, but instead, I'm confronted with negativity and divisiveness that drain my energy.

I've started to prioritize my mental well-being, stepping back from situations that no longer serve me or spark joy.

This shift has allowed me to reflect on what truly matters to me.

I'm seeking deeper connections and experiences that resonate on a more meaningful level. As I move away from trivial disputes and superficial engagements, I feel a sense of liberation. It's a journey toward understanding myself better and embracing what brings me genuine happiness, rather than getting caught up in the noise around me.

~Balt Rodriguez

Book Review: "The Pursuit of Happiness" by Jeffrey Rosen

by Michael Ettinger, Attorney at Law

"Character is destiny" said by Heraclitus some 3,000 years ago, neatly sums up constitutional scholar Rosen's new book, "The Pursuit of Happiness".

Examining in depth what the Founders meant by the famous phrase, we learn that Adams, Jefferson, Franklin and Washington, amongst many others, believed that happiness was found in the study of virtue and constant "self-improvement". The concept of happiness as the pursuit of pleasure or "feeling good" instead of "being good" would have been repugnant to them. They were lifelong learners, committed to practicing daily habits of self-improvement, self-mastery, flourishing and growth. Happiness was "pursued" rather than obtained – a quest rather than a destination, a quest which Cicero described as "a prize beyond all human wealth or honor or physical pleasure".

The Founders embraced stoic philosophy that to achieve freedom, tranquility and happiness, we should stop trying to control external events and focus on controlling ourselves – our thoughts, desires, emotions and actions. Essentially, the Founders sought to overcome thoughts of envy, arrogance, fear, jealousy and that only by acting without regard to oneself, can one live in harmony with nature in the present.

Virtue can today be called "good character" or what psychologists call "emotional intelligence", defined as "the ability to understand, use and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict".

COMMUNITY KINDNESS KORNER

"In their private letters and diaries, public speeches and poems, the Founders talked constantly about their own struggles to control their tempers and to be their best selves by using reason to regulate their selfish passions", writes the author. Citing Epictetus, who urges calm in the face of adversity, he says, "Do not seek to have everything that happens happen as you wish, but wish for everything that happens as it actually does happen, and your life will be serene".

One passage that Jefferson shared throughout his life was Cicero's definition of the wise and happy man as one "whose soul is tranquilized by restraint and consistency and who is at peace with himself", writes Rosen. The Founders believed that the "right" to pursue happiness included the "duty" to do so. They believed that happiness was essentially peace of mind obtained through the pursuit of virtue – actually learning how to be a good person, a person of character.

Both Franklin and Jefferson were fond of quoting Seneca's prescription for happiness: "The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations...to enjoy the present, without any anxious dependence on the future. Not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient; for he that is so wants nothing...tranquility is a certain equality of mind, which no condition or fortune can either exact or depress. Nothing can make it less, for it is the state of human perfection."



SINGLES CLUB
Host Debra Dougherty



Let us gather and give thanks!

All are welcome!!

Texas Roadhouse
11/22 @ 4:00pm

Call Debra 631-834-3661 to register



IDENTITY THEFT, FRAUD & SCAMS

Avoid becoming a victim !

Follow these guidelines...



Talk to someone! Before you give up your money or personal information, talk to someone you trust such as a family member. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. They may even make threats. Slow down, check out the story, do an online search, consult an expert or simply tell a friend.



Keep in mind that wiring money is like sending cash: the sender has no protection against loss! Con artists often insist that people wire money, especially overseas, because it's nearly impossible to reverse the transaction or trace the money. Don't wire money to strangers, to sellers or to someone who claims to be a relative in an emergency (and also wants to keep the request secret).



Don't send money to someone you don't know! That includes an online merchant you've never heard of—or an online love interest/romance who asks for money or favors. It's best to do business with sites you know and trust. If you buy items through an online auction, consider a payment option that provides protection, like a credit card. Don't ever send cash or use a wire transfer service.

Also, consider how you pay. Credit cards have significant fraud protection built in, but some payment methods do not. Wiring money through services like Western Union or MoneyGram is risky because it's nearly impossible to get your money back. That's also true for reloadable cards (ex: MoneyPak or Reloadit) & gift cards (ex: iTunes or Google Play). Government offices/agencies & honest companies won't require these forms of payment.



Don't respond to messages that ask for your personal or financial information, whether the message comes as an email, a phone call, a text message, or an ad! Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, a family member, a charity or a company you do business with. Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request. The scammers are trying to trick you into giving up your personal information. Do not click on links in an email or call phone numbers that are left on your answering machine or voicemail. If you get a message and are concerned about any account status call the phone number on your credit or debit card, or your statement and check it out to confirm legitimacy.



Don't believe your caller ID! Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information displayed. The phone number & name you see aren't always real. If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up! If you think the caller might be telling the truth, call back the number you know to be genuine.

IDENTITY THEFT, FRAUD & SCAMS



Don't pay upfront for a promise! Someone might ask you to pay in advance for things like debt relief, credit & loan offers, mortgage assistance, or a job. They might even say you've won a prize, but first you must pay taxes or fees. If you do, they will take your money & disappear.

In addition, do not play a foreign lottery. It's easy to be tempted by messages that boast enticing odds in a foreign lottery, or messages that claim you've already won. Inevitably you'll be asked to pay taxes, fees or custom duties to collect your prize. If you send money, you won't get it back, regardless of promises. Please note, it is illegal to play foreign lotteries.



Do not agree to deposit a check from someone you don't know & then wire money back, no matter how convincing their story! By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within a few days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. You are responsible for the checks you deposit. When a check turns out to be fraudulent, it is your responsibility for paying back the banking institution.



Read your bills & monthly statements regularly- hardcopy or online! Scammers steal account information & then run up charges or commit crimes in your name. Dishonest merchants sometimes bill you for monthly "membership fees" & other goods or services you didn't authorize. If you see charges you don't recognize or didn't approve, contact your bank, card issuer, or other creditor immediately.



In the wake of a natural disaster or another crisis, give to established charities rather than one that seems to have sprung up overnight. Pop-up charities probably don't have the infrastructure to get help to the affected areas or people, & they could be collecting the money to finance illegal activity. Check out ftc.gov/charity fraud to learn more.



Talk to your doctor before buying health products or signing up for medical treatments. Ask about research that supports a product's claims-& possible risks or side effects. Buy prescription drugs only from licensed U.S. pharmacies. Otherwise, you could end up with products that are fake, expired or mislabeled – in short, products that could be dangerous. Visit ftc.gov/health for more information.



Remember there's no such thing as a sure thing! If someone contacts you promoting low-risk, high-return investment opportunities, stay away. When you hear pitches that insist you act now, guarantees of big profits, promises of little or no financial risk, or demands that you send cash immediately, report them to the FTC. For more information about investment fraud, visit cftc.gov.

If you believe you have become a victim of Identity Theft call:

Suffolk County Police Department 631 852-COPS (2677) or visit www.suffolkpd.org

SCPD Financial Crimes Unit at 631 852-6821

FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AT www.ftc.gov, or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY 1-866-653-4621.



PASS ALONG TO FAMILY & FRIENDS

HEALTH & WELLNESS

AT CAPACITY

By Melissa Kirsch printed in New York Times

Good morning. If we can't remember the things we've read and watched and even loved, do they still "count"?



Everyone I know seems to be talking about their memory lately, how it isn't what it used to be. Mine isn't, and there's some comfort in commiseration. Yes, we're getting older, isn't it something to observe, how we can no longer so easily recall names or events or what it was we were just about to say.

My memory used to be so good I'd have to hide it so it didn't weird people out. I'd pretend not to remember someone's full name and their kids' names and how they used to own a coffee shop outside Albany, lest they think I'd freakishly compiled a dossier on them after our brief conversation at a party three years ago. Now, I'm rewatching a TV series I remember liking in 2022 because I can't remember even the broadest outline of the plot. I constantly jot notes on stuff that used to surface in the normal churn of my brain's functioning: funny remarks people make, bits of gossip, summaries of conversations. I take minutes on my own life.

Sure, age probably has a lot to do with it. For a while, I blamed quarantine and stress for dulling my edge (one friend suggested I might be in my "butter knife era"). But lately the metaphor that seems most apt is that of a computer: It feels as if my hard drive is full. I'm reading and watching and listening to so much content — in addition to living life and having actual experiences, never mind daydreams and nightmares and extended reveries — that it seems I'm running out of disk space. I can't count on things to auto-save anymore. Since I can't selectively delete stuff the way I would with an actual hard drive, I'm left creating backups in notebooks, mistrusting my own outmoded technology.

I'm particularly interested in how a full hard drive is affecting my consumption of culture. Cultural omnivores keep lists of the books they've read and the movies they've watched, adding to their knowledge and fluency with each item checked off. As I went through The Times's recent list of the 100 best books of the century, I was gratified by how many I'd read but wondered if a book still counted if I couldn't remember much about it.

What does it mean for a book, a show, an experience to "count," anyway? Do you need to be able to recall the plot in detail? Should you be able to describe scenes or bits of dialogue, larger

HEALTH & WELLNESS

themes, cultural relevance? Or is it enough to just remember enjoying a book, or to be able to conjure a feeling it inspired? I was mulling these questions when I came across this essay by James Collins from 2010. In it, he describes books that he loved about which he remembers nothing: “All I associate with them is an atmosphere and a stray image or two, like memories of trips I took as a child.”

Collins suspected, as I do, that the books he can’t remember must have had an effect on his brain anyway, that the experience of reading and engaging with the texts must have changed him in some deeper way, leaving “a kind of mental radiation — that continues to affect me even if I can’t detect it.” I want to believe that my immersion in the fascinating characters and rich plot of “Creation Lake” by Rachel Kushner are performing some kind of alchemy in my brain even if — and it seems unthinkable, halfway through the book — I am likely to forget it all.

Maryanne Wolf, a neuroscientist, confirmed for Collins that inability to recall a book’s details shouldn’t be taken as evidence that we didn’t assimilate it in some way. “We can’t retrieve the specifics, but to adapt a phrase of William James’s, there is a wraith of memory,” she told him. “The information you get from a book is stored in networks. We have an extraordinary capacity for storage, and much more is there than you realize. It is in some way working on you even though you aren’t thinking about it.” More computer parallels!

After reading Collins’s essay, I did what I always do when someone’s writing resonates with me — I looked him up. I found a charming 2008 article about him and his home in Virginia, learned about a book he wrote, which the Times review called “a great big sunny lemon chiffon pie of a novel,” and reserved it from the library. This, I realized, 15 minutes and six open tabs into my digression, is why my brain’s coffers are bursting. There’s too much information, and I’m absolutely helpless to resist it. I look forward to reading Collins’s novel, and I look forward to remembering absolutely none of it.

