

March 31, 2016

Volume 2, Issue 1

# Columbia Chatter

The Official Town of Columbia (TOC) Newsletter



### Special points of interest:

- > Beach erosion & ADA plan
- > RFD/RFP for Master Plan @ Rec Park
- > Earth Day Event w/ Light Bulb Exchange & Composter Raffle 4/16/16
- > 2016: 50th Anniversary of Historical Society
- > New "Find-A-Grave" App
- > Snr. Ctr. Barbeque 5/19/16
- > Upcoming tax deadlines
- > 4 new businesses in town!
- > Street sweeping in April & May
- > Pull your permits!
- > Register to vote!
- > Give input on the POCD
- > License your dog please!

## Spring has Sprung! Time to get your Transfer Station Stickers, Boat Mooring Stickers & Beach Passes! By Kim Bona

Hi everyone and Happy Spring!!! I would like to remind Columbia's boaters that the Annual Boat Mooring Lottery is approaching. Those who are interested in purchasing a mooring for the 2016 beach season must submit to me the following information: *Name, address, phone number, email and type of boat.*

The cost for a seasonal mooring is \$100. The Boat Mooring Lottery will be held on April 19, 2016 at the BOS meeting. Names will be randomly pulled from "a hat" by Board members. Depending on what number your submit-

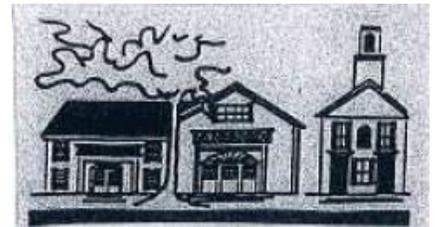
tal is picked, determines who will get first pick at his/her desired mooring. On April 20th, I will call each person who participated in the Lottery and let him/her know what number they were picked and how they will go about choosing their mooring.

That being said, with spring also comes time to renew transfer station stickers! A town wide mailer will be sent out to all households with information on when new stickers will be required along with the cost. This mailer will also include information on 2016 beach passes and when those will be

available for purchase as well as cost.

Transfer Station stickers will be sold in the Town Administration and Clerk Offices. Boat Moorings are handled in Town Administration. For questions please feel free to call me at 860-228-0110 or email [kbona@columbiact.org](mailto:kbona@columbiact.org)

Beach passes will be sold in the Parks & Recreation Department ONLY. For more information, please visit the Recreation section of this issue or contact the Director of Parks and Recreation, Marc Volza at 860-228-8513 or [recdirector@columbiact.org](mailto:recdirector@columbiact.org).



## Current Commission, Committee & Board Vacancies

Columbia encourages volunteers to serve on the following committees, commissions and boards:

- Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA): 2 Additional Needed
- Economic Development Commission (EDC): 3 Vacancies
- Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC): 1 Vacancy
- Recreation Commission (REC): 1 Vacancy
- Szegda Farm Management Committee (SFM): 3 Vacancies
- Youth Services Committee (YSC): 2 Vacancies

*\*Interested? Visit the Town website for more information on meeting schedule and duties Contact the Town Administrator at 860-228-0110!*

### Inside this issue:

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### From the Desk of Town Administrator, Natasha R. Nau

Since our first issue of this newsletter (Vol.1, Iss.1) was published on 12/23/15 a tremendous amount has been accomplished in Town.

I worked very hard with staff on creating the FY 16-17 budget. My goal is to minimize spending while also listening to resident and staff needs. For the first time, Columbia has a 10-year Capital budget, which will help us plan farther out.

I have been working on attaining proposals for the beach erosion and ADA work. A firm has been selected for the design work and public meeting(s) will be scheduled for resident input. The Public Works Dept. will begin construction in Sept./Oct.

The Town Planner and I worked on advertising the RFQ/RFP for a Rec Park and Contiguous Land Master Plan. 14 companies submitted qualifications. We will be reviewing those for interviews soon. I have also been researching a new playscape for Rec Park with the Parks & Rec + PW Director.

I have been working with the Open Space Committee and the Assessor on potentially acquiring a parcel of open space.

I have been working with CONA Chair Cathie Rowe on the federal 5310 grant (hopefully) for the purchase of a senior transportation van, which is due April 29th and

will be advertised in the Chronicle.

Unfortunately, not enough residents applied for the Rehab Housing Program in February so we will not be pursuing that grant this year with Coventry.

I submitted a STEAP grant in January for the Hop River Bridge rehab and we are still waiting to hear if we are awarded.

I continue to oversee the Library expansion/renovation project, which should be complete by August 31st.

Lastly, I have begun working with the EDC Chair and staff to boost businesses' experiences in Town.

*Please sign up to receive emails and "like" our Facebook to keep up with Town news!*



### From the Desk of the EAC by Andrea Drabicki, Secretary

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) will host its first Earth Day Event on Saturday, April 16, in Yeoman's Hall at 323 Route 87 from 11am-4pm. An event mailer will be sent out the first week of April. The event will feature energy efficiency experts, energy demonstrations, local land and water conservation groups, activities for children, a composter raffle, food and beverages. There will be a **FREE** Light Bulb Swap for residents to bring in **up to 5** incandescent or compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs in any condition and exchange them for 5 new **60 watt** energy efficient **LED** bulbs. Citizens must provide proof of residence (identification, utility bill, event mailer). Light bulbs will be distributed to Columbia residents **while supplies last**. Natasha Nau, Columbia Town Administrator said, "[...] I hope resi-

dents take advantage of it so they can make their home more energy efficient and ultimately lower their electric bill."

The EAC strives to promote the vision of a sustainable community through the efforts of energized citizens and businesses. The EAC intends to further its mission to increase awareness and education of public on environmental topics and best practices.

The town was awarded a \$5,000 Bright Idea Grant through its participation in the Energize Connecticut's Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program. Having signed the CEC pledge in 2015, Columbia committed to make efforts to reduce municipal building energy consumption by 20%; one of the fastest returns on investments, or identified "low hanging fruit", when making energy efficiency upgrades in any building is by replac-

ing high energy consuming light bulbs. A single LED bulb has an average life expectancy of 20 years or 50,000 hours, uses up to 80 percent less energy, and can save as much as \$10 per year. Residents and businesses looking to save energy and money should visit [www.energizect.com](http://www.energizect.com) or call 877-947-3873.

**SolarizeCT:** The Solarize Program is back! Concerned that you missed your chance to Solarize? No worries! Solarize has expanded to let all Connecticut residents participate. Zero percent (0%) down financing and pre-qualified installers available.

#### Other Upcoming Environmental Dates:

- **Earth Day** – 4/22/16
- **Arbor Day** – 4/29/16
- **Bike Walk CT** – 6/3/16 Annual Summit @ Central CT State University
- **National Trails Day** – 6/4/16

*"Earth Day Event with Light Bulb Swap 4/16/16 11am-4pm Yeomans Hall"*



**25 Free!**



### From the Desk of First Selectman, Carmen Vance

This is a busy time of year for staff and boards that have to work on the budget for 2016-2017. Just like in a family, expenses always seem to increase and there seems to be more and more to do. The proposed budgets from the school and the town have gone to FiPAC. FiPAC members will review the requests and discuss over the next several weeks. The Public Hearing on the proposed budget will be April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. This is an opportunity for residents to ask questions, make sug-

gestions and discuss their concerns. FiPAC will listen to concerns and prepare a final proposed budget to be voted on at the town Budget Meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Please try to attend both meetings. Remember that it is the town residents who ultimately approve or disapprove the town budget.

Recently the BOS approved moving from a part-time to a full-time Recreation Director. Marc Volza has proven to be a great asset for the town. He is anxious to hear ideas on how we

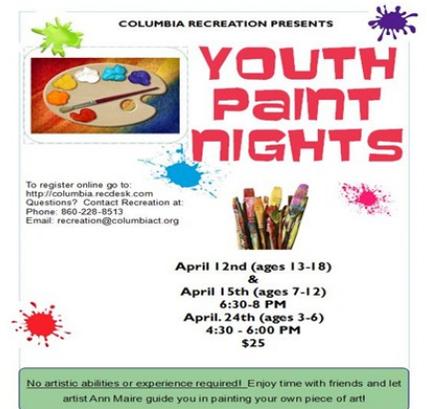
can provide a variety of programs for residents of all ages. Email or give him a call if you have any ideas.

2016 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Columbia Historical Society. A brochure describing the year's programs will be sent to each household. Please review and try to attend some of them and help celebrate this very special year.

The library renovations are well under way. The mild winter has helped considerably. It is anticipated that the library will be

able to move back in late August. We appreciate all the work done by the library staff and volunteers in providing uninterrupted library services to residents.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in the office or my cell 860-336-8119 if you have any issues or concerns you would like to discuss.



COLUMBIA RECREATION PRESENTS  
**YOUTH PAINT NIGHTS**

To register online go to: <http://columbia.recreat.com>  
Questions? Contact Recreation at:  
Phone: 860-228-9513  
Email: [recreation@columbiact.org](mailto:recreation@columbiact.org)

April 12nd (ages 13-18)  
&  
April 15th (ages 7-12)  
6:30-8 PM  
April 24th (ages 3-6)  
4:30 - 6:00 PM  
\$25

No artistic abilities or experience required! Enjoy time with friends and let artist Ann Maire guide you in painting your own piece of art!

### From the Desk of Parks & Recreation Director, Marc Volza

On May 24<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm in Yeoman's Hall there will be a beach sign-up night. With many changes occurring involving the beach this year, this night will provide an opportunity to register and receive any assistance you may need. Beach Passes will begin going on sale starting May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Resident	Season Pass	Day Pass	Transferrable Guest Pass
5-17	\$20	\$5	\$40
18-61	\$30	\$5	\$40
62+	\$15	\$5	\$40
Non-Resident	Season Pass		
5-17	\$200		
18-61	\$300		
62+	\$150		

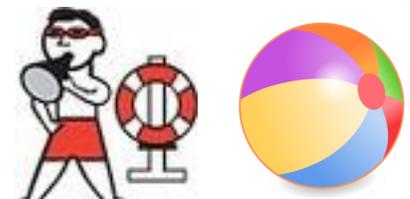


**New Beach Season!**  
June 10<sup>th</sup>- August 17<sup>th</sup>  
Weekends only from May 28th-July 9th and August 17<sup>th</sup>- Labor Day.



The Recreation Department now has new hours!!  
**Mon-Weds: 8am-4pm**  
**Thurs: 8am-7pm**

**New Beach Hours**  
Weekdays  
1030am-7pm  
Weekends  
12pm-7pm





## From the Desk of Town Historian, Ingrid Wood

Coinciding with this presidential election year the Town of Columbia Historical Archive and Collection gratefully accepted a unique memorial gift, an assemblage of presidential and state campaign buttons c. 1935 – 1975. The framed display of 50 buttons is mounted on a black velvet background. It includes two large hologram buttons; an image of John F. Kennedy superimposed with the slogan “Man for the 60s” (c.1960), and alternating images of the “Johnson and Humphrey” (c.1964).

Of interest are the “Re-Elect Roosevelt” (c.1940) campaign buttons, and one anti-Roosevelt campaign button that reads “No Third Term” (c.1940). Local campaign buttons include “ELLA” (c.1974) and “You’re Better Off with Ribicoff for U.S. Senator” (c.1938), shown here.

Archivist Joan Hill has been carefully cleaning, documenting, and photographing headstones and footstones in the Old Yard Burying Ground since last summer. Joan Hill is shown on the left

measuring a grave-stone. She has verified and documented all of the Old Yard monuments that now appear in the Find-A-Grave “app”. Her work and that of her team has rekindled genealogical and historical interest in some of Columbia’s First Families. Some of this information is available nowhere else. The now legible inscription detail prompted a visit from the Wright and Woodworth family descendants, who graciously provided additional genealogical information.

## From the Beckish Senior Center by Director, Bernadette Derring

**“Annual Barbeque**  
**May 19, 2016**  
 12pm  
 \$5/person  
**Dance Party**  
**June 4, 2016**  
 5-10pm  
 \$15/person”

Over the past 3 months, we have enjoyed Chris Urban and TVCCA lunches with great attendance. Many have been followed by guest speakers on end of life preparation and health and safety. We have re-started computer classes with EastComm students on Mondays at 1pm. All are welcome. Art classes are underway with Bob Oxenhorn for only \$10 on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. AARP has been working very hard providing free tax preparation for those 55 years of age and older.

Interested in a day/overnight trip? Stop in and see what we have to offer.

Thank you to all who joined us for the Chili Cook Off on March 10, 2016. The participants and judges enjoyed an afternoon of chili tasting. There was also cornbread, ice-cream, and beverages. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 12pm, for a small fee of \$3 you can come and enjoy a lunch in with Scott Gray and a “Hot Stove” talk. Scott Gray was WTIC’s sports anchor for the “Bob Steele Show” for 34 years.

Yee Haw! Its barbeque time! Join us on May 19, 2016 at 12pm. For \$5 at the door you can come and enjoy

hamburgers, hotdogs, ice-cream, potato salad, and all the fixings! We will have a special musical guest David Sadolski!

Get up and groove! On Saturday, June 4, 2016, from 5pm to 10pm, come and join the Beckish Senior Center for CSO’s Annual Dance Party with Bruce John. For \$15 per person come dance the night away and enjoy food provided by Audiberts Catering. Tickets are on sale now!

Check out *The GEM*, the center’s newsletter! It can be found at the Center, Saxton B. Little Free Library, Ted’s Supermarket, Columbia Ford, Dunkin Donuts & Gina Marie’s.



### From the Assessor's Office by Mary Lavallee

The Assessor's Office is now accepting applications for the **Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief Program** for the 2015 Grand List. Applications may be filed in the office of the Assessor until May 15, 2016. The guidelines for qualifying income are a maximum of \$42,900 for a married couple and \$35,200 for a single person. This income includes Social Security, interest, pensions and any other income received during 2015.

The **Renter's Relief program** will begin April 1 and run through October 1, 2016. The income guidelines are the same as the Homeowners Program above. You will also need proof of rents paid and utilities for the 2015 calendar year.

**Motor vehicle adjustments**  
In order to have a motor vehicle bill adjusted we need **two** forms of proof because the tax is a car tax not a road tax.

- The first is a copy of your motor vehicle plate return receipt
- The second is something

proving you got rid of the vehicle. For a list of accepted proofs look on the assessor's website or call the office.

If you traded a vehicle and **kept the same plate** do not bring us any documentation because DMV will automatically process the adjustments.

The Assessor's Office is open Monday through Wednesday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Thursdays 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Fridays 8 a.m. until Noon. Our telephone number is 228-9555.

***"Elderly & Disabled Tax Relief application deadline: May 15, 2016"***



### From the Tax Collection Office by Carol Price

If real estate taxes on the October 1, 2014 Grand List that were due July 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016 are not paid by May 31, 2016, a continuing tax lien will be filed in the land records as required by law. Any tax not paid by June 30, 2016 will be listed by name and amount in the annual Town Report. This office uses the postmark for payment date.

You can now view and

pay your bills online. Please go to the Town website and click on the "view and pay" button. Service fees do apply. You can also find your payment history online. After you click on "view and pay" tax bills. Click on the square on the frequently asked questions page to reach a search screen. To look up your tax payment history, select IRS payment records for year 2015

in the search criteria. This brings you to a list of your bills. Click on the box next to the word IRS a view IRS button appears. Click on that button to view all payments.

The tax office is open Monday through Wednesday 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, Thursday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm and closed on Friday.



### Businesses & Current Applications in Town by Natasha R. Nau, Town Administrator

There are a few new businesses coming into Town and I want to take this opportunity to give them a warm welcome!

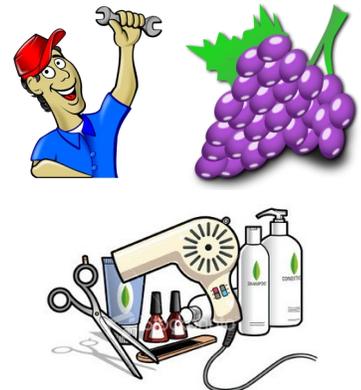
A hair salon with office space above it on Route 6 was approved by PZC.

A licensed automobile repair shop named Dorsey Custom LLC located on Route 6 was approved at the end of March.

A roadside stand (winery) on Route 87 was recently approved. There are 7 acres of grapes. They will be building a processing area, which will be used for washing, destemming, making wine, etc. The owners plan to sell produce, bread and cheese and eventually conduct wine tasting and sale of their wine. The hours of operation will be 11am-5pm. In the sum-

mer, they may extend the hours to 9:30 pm.

A 55+ neighborhood retirement housing development is before PZC for consideration from Hometown Builders. There will be 2 dwellings per 40,000 square feet. Each will have 600 sq. ft. of living area. There will be guest parking, a community building, recreation and open space area.





### From the Desk of Public Works Director, George Murphy

Due to the extremely mild winter, very little snowplowing and sanding was done this year. This means that we will show a significant cost savings in this area of the budget. Final snowfall numbers will be provided in the next newsletter.

Eversource notified us in December that they would be performing a large amount of utility tree trimming from January through March. This should be complete soon.

The Department of Public Works took

down all the trees at the Old Yarde Cemetery.

The DPW also responded to a safety concern at the temporary library crosswalk. Orange flags were placed for pedestrians to use while crossing.

Street sweeping will occur in April and May as the weather permits. The schedule of roads can be found on the homepage of the Town website. A new replacement hopper was purchased for the sweeper in order for this to happen.

Catch basin work will start at the end of April,

which involved cleaning them out as well as making any necessary repairs.

Drainage work will occur on Lake Road and Hennequin Road over the Spring/Summer.

In May and June, Dilaj Drive, Bears Den Way and Deer Run will be milled.



**"The 5th Annual Rose Marrotte Art Show will be held June 13th-17th"**



### From the Desk of Margaret Schatz, CSD President

The art committee sponsored a program on the Muslim religion. We had two young women from ECSC. It was an informal talk about their lives. Everyone enjoyed the event and learned something. We hope to do more programs on different topics soon.

**The 5th Annual Rose Marrotte Art Show** will be held **June 13th --17th**. Prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category: *painting, photography and arts and crafts*. Bring a piece in, or just come in

and view. You may vote for your favorite in each category. **Art classes are ongoing on 2nd&4th Tuesday @1pm**. Artist Robert Oxenhorn, a Columbia resident is our Instructor. The classes are great for beginners or more experienced.

We will be taking a trip to the UConn Greenhouse. They have many unique plants. We have a Guided tour and a scavenger hunt. Lunch @ Chuck & Augies. In April, we will have a trip to Wickware Planetarium @ ECSC. Our own

VP, Sheran Smith will present the program.

Maureen Allen and her program committee had a great Chilli Cook-off. We had 7 chillis which were judged. Thanks to our Town Administrator, Natasha Nau, who was one of the judges.

Scott Gray (Wtic) will be a luncheon speaker in April, a BBQ in May and our dinner dance in June (music by Bruce John) Call the senior center for more info or to sign up for trips or programs. Thanks to all the volunteers for their hard work!

### From the Desk of Fire Marshal, Mike Lester

It's time to change all of the batteries in your smoke alarms and CO detectors. It's good practice to do this when you change your clocks in the spring and in the fall. It's recommend to replace any alarms that are older than 7 years of service.

Open burning is allowed in town with

an open burning permit. Campfires no larger than 3 feet in diameter are allowed without a permit. It's strongly recommended to have a garden hose, pale of water, and a steel rake readily available to keep the fire safe and contained.

Lastly, only firewood burning is al-

lowed - even if you have obtained a proper permit. No lumber, furniture, pallets, tires or hazardous materials are to be burned. The State Police issues citations for illegal burning. To obtain an open burning permit, contact the Land Use Department at 860-228-0440.

Be safe!!



3:00 a.m.

### From the Building and Land Use Department by Cindee Hodge

Spring has sprung! Many projects around the home are set to begin. Please be sure to pull your permits! A few that come to mind for spring:

- ALL sheds/garage (big and small); none are consid-

- ered temporary
- ALL decks (new or repairs)
- Re-roofs
- Windows (new or replacement)
- Driveways

If you live in the lake zone: all paver patios,

walls, docks, drive-

ways. Again, feel free to call Cindee at 860-228-0440 if you are uncertain.



### From the Desk of the Registrar of Voters

**Presidential Preference Primary:** The Democratic & Republican Presidential Preference Primaries will be held on Tuesday, **April 26<sup>th</sup>, 6am – 8pm** in Yeomans Hall. Absentee ballots will become available on Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. Please contact the Town Clerk if you need to vote via absentee ballot.

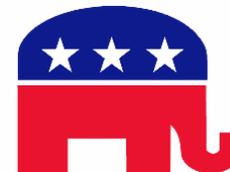
There will be an open enrollment session in at our office in Yeomans Hall on **April 12<sup>th</sup> from 1pm to 3pm.** After April 21<sup>st</sup>,

voter registration must be done in person at the Registrars' or Town Clerk's office. The last day to enroll in a party and be eligible to vote in the Primary is **April 25<sup>th</sup>** at noon. Please note that this is only open to new voters or voters who are currently Unaffiliated and would like to register in a party. Election Day Registration (EDR) will not be available during the Primary.

**Did you know?** In Columbia, there are currently 3546 registered vot-

ers, of which 1180 are registered Democrats and 854 are registered Republicans. 127 are registered in various minor parties and the remaining 1385 are Unaffiliated.

Primaries in CT are "Closed Primaries", meaning that only voters registered for the party which is holding the Primary may vote. So only registered Republicans can vote in the Republican Primary and only registered Democrats can vote in the Democratic Primary.



Please check our Registrar of Voters page on the town website or contact our office for more information.

## Shaping Columbia's Future-Paula Stahl, Town Planner

Volume 2, Issue 1

I have been working with the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) on updating the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) that will guide Columbia's future for the next 10 years. Our last POCD was adopted in 2006 and has been used by Town Boards, Committees, Commissions and staff as they consider regulations and policy changes. CT State Statutes require Towns adopt a new plan every 10 years. A POCD is the long-range master plan (which consists of a Strategic and Implementation plan) for a town's future growth and conservation. It is developed with input from residents, property owners, business owners, Boards, Commissions, Committee and staff as adopted by the PZC. In September 2015, many residents responded to an on-line survey called "Shaping Columbia's Future", and those comments were reviewed, tallied and used to guide the

draft. The POCD outlines the vision for future business and housing development and identifies important natural and community resources that should be considered for conservation. Towns that do not have an updated Plan may not be eligible for grants. The deadline to submit Columbia's adopted POCD to the State is June 30, 2016. Without implementing a POCD, a town's future will be shaped by the whims of the market, potentially leaving it unable to meet the future needs and desires of its residents. The Plan will be posted on the Town's website after April 5th. To share your comments, please attend a meeting, or email [PStahl@ColumbiaCT.org](mailto:PStahl@ColumbiaCT.org). The PZC will have a Listening Session on May 9th to talk about the Plan and hear comments from residents. Before adoption, the PZC will hold a Public Hearing that is tentatively scheduled for June 13th.



### Columbia Town Hall

323 Route 87

Columbia, CT 06237

### Town Administration

Phone: 860-228-0110

Fax: 860-228-1952

[www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org)

## From the Town Clerk's Office by Robin Kenefick and Gail McGrath

**DOG LICENSES:** June is dog licensing month. License renewals will be mailed out in the month of May to all owners who registered their dog(s) the previous year. **New licenses must be obtained before July 1, 2016 to avoid a penalty.** Whether you are renewing your dog's license in person or through the mail, if their rabies vaccination has expired, please provide us with a copy of their current rabies vaccination certificate. If the dog is newly spayed or neutered, include a copy of the veterinarian's certificate as well. **When renewing by mail, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the proper postage.**

If you are new to town and have not registered your dog or you have a new dog that is at least six months old, stop by the Town Clerk's office to obtain your dog license. License fees are \$19 for females and males and \$8 for spayed females or neutered males. Licenses will be considered late as of July 1 and a late fee of \$1 per month thereafter will be assessed. For further information, contact the Town Clerk's office at 860-228-3284.

**RABIES CLINIC:** A rabies clinic, sponsored by the Andover and Columbia Town Clerk's offices, will be held in late April/early May at the Andover Town Garage, Long Hill Road, Andover, CT. If your pet has been previously vaccinated, please bring writ-

ten proof of their last rabies vaccination. Method of payment for the clinic is cash. We look forward to seeing you and your pets! Please check our website ([www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org)) and The Gem for details. The Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association ([www.ctvet.org](http://www.ctvet.org)) coordinates low cost rabies clinics around the state from April to June. The Fox Memorial Clinic at the Connecticut Humane Society ([www.cthumane.org](http://www.cthumane.org)) also offers low cost vaccination clinics.

**JUSTICES OF THE PEACE:** This is the year for Justices of the Peace to be nominated. If you are interested in this position, contact your party affiliation chairman. If you are not a mem-

ber of a major party, contact the Town Clerk's office for more information.

**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY:** The primary will take place on April 26, 2016. Applications for absentee ballots are available now in the Town Clerk's office. Absentee ballots will be available beginning April 5, 2016.

