

*Columbia*

# VIEWS

*Volume 5 • Issue 1*  
*Winter 2021*

*Your Hometown Connection • Columbia, CT*



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welcoming new patients



Happy New Year! Hopefully 2021 will be a much better year. With the new year comes the great news of a vaccine. At the time of this publication the State of CT is currently in Phase 1b of our statewide rollout plan and scheduling is now for Individuals 75 and older.



Scheduling a COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment in Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS): Please go to the VAMS website at <https://vams.cdc.gov>. Seniors who need assistance can contact the Beckish Senior Center at 860-228-0759.

If you are not a VAMS user, but interested in learning more, or if you have questions about the availability of COVID-19 vaccine in your area and if you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, please contact Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD) at [www.ehhd.org](http://www.ehhd.org).

Scheduling a COVID-19 Vaccine with Hartford Healthcare: Please go to <https://hartfordhealthcare.org> for more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and to schedule your vaccination.

Updated information can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/covid-19%20vaccinations>

Call the CT COVID Vaccine Appointment Assist Line at 877-918-2224, Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Needless to say this line is handling a large volume. There is a call back option for long wait times.

The Town of Columbia's departments are open by appointment only; however, we continue to encourage residents to use on-line services and the drop-boxes at

Yeoman's Hall and Town Hall. We have installed a lock box by Yeoman's Hall for payments, correspondence, permits, Transfer Station Applications, Dog License, etc. Tax Payments can be dropped off at the lockbox in front of Town Hall's front door. For a staff directory to schedule an appointment please go to the Town of Columbia's website at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). Please respect our safety guidelines by wearing a mask when entering the building, use hand sanitizer at the entrance, and observe social distancing guidelines.

The Town of Columbia is accepting donations to assist those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations may be used for food supply, fuel assistance, protective equipment and other social services that will benefit those affected by COVID-19. Donations can be made by check, payable to the Town of Columbia or online at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org) on the Recreation Departments page.

With winter upon us there are some winter tips to keep in mind. Sand is available at the Transfer Station, check your mailbox and post to make sure both are secure and clear around mailboxes for easy identification for emergency services. We encourage anyone with a medical condition or a disability that may require additional help during a power outage to notify us. Please contact the Senior Center Director, Bernadette Derring at 860-228-0759.

I would also like to thank all of our volunteer fire and emergency services personnel for their service.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett

*First Selectman*

[severett@columbiact.org](mailto:severett@columbiact.org)

860-228-0110

## COLUMBIA OPEN SPACE

### *New names for open space parcels*

What's in a name? Names can honor people, can invoke historical events, or call attention to natural features.

The Board of Selectmen recently named two open space parcels acquired by the Town. The first one is a parcel on Route 66 which connects to Rec Park, purchased in 2014 by the Town, utilizing funds from the Brand Bequeath. Henrietta Brand left a sum of money to the Town in her will, which specified that the funds be used for recreation.

The Town utilized some of the money to purchase the parcel of land which they have now named, "Brand Woods."

In 2018 The Town of Columbia acquired a 56-acre parcel of land in Wells Woods. This land is part of the Salmon River Watershed and it has high ecological value for its pristine wetland, fed by Mint Brook, and surrounded by forest. It has historical value with mill ruins on Mint Brook, and foundations of barns and homes from the 18th and 19th century. The new name chosen for this land is "Mint Brook Preserve."

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ON THE COVER: *Early Snow on Mono Pond.*  
Photo by Paul Ramsey

## 2019/20 VIEWS Magazines Schedule

### 2nd Q/21

**COLUMBIA:** Ad Deadline 4/2/2021  
Mailed Week of 5/3/2021

**HEBRON:** Ad Deadline 5/7/2021  
Mailed Week of 6/7/2021

### 3rd Q/20

**COLUMBIA:** Ad Deadline 7/2/2021  
Mailed Week of 8/9/2021

**HEBRON:** Ad Deadline 8/6/2021  
Mailed Week of 9/6/2021

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

#### Executive Director & Co-Founder

Bryan A. Perry  
[baperry@epicmagazines.com](mailto:baperry@epicmagazines.com)

#### Sales Associate

Paul Ramsey • [paul@epicmagazines.com](mailto:paul@epicmagazines.com)

#### Billing

Josie Guillemain • [josie@neprintingnetwork.com](mailto:josie@neprintingnetwork.com)

#### Art Director

Russell Shaddox

#### Special thanks to

Jennifer C. LaVoie  
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2020 has certainly been a challenging year! I would like to thank all our employees, committees, commission members, and town residents for continued support and the abundance of patience demonstrated during this extraordinary year!



Learning new and creative ways to continue to provide all the essential town services was a constant moving target. With an abundance of unrest throughout our country and globally we had our work cut out for ourselves.

We have been able to keep our schools and town facilities functioning and holding tight while we prepare for our vaccines and testing procedures.

A big thanks goes out to our health district, State and local emergency management, State Police, Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, and ambulance personnel.

First Selectman Steven Everett, Public Works Director Beth Lunt and I have been working hard on ways to improve the safety of our town's roads and intersections. We have sought the help from the Connecticut Safety Circuit Rider (SCR) program. The Speed Display/Driver Feedback Sign Program will provide the town with two speed display signs each, at no cost to the town, over the course of the next two years. The new program will assist the Town of Columbia at reducing fatal and serious-injury speed-related crashes.



From left to right; Beth Lunt, Public Works Director; Melissa Evans, Safety Circuit Rider; Greg DeCarli, Resident State Trooper.

Happy New Year! I am very excited to see our lives having the hope of a new normal. I know we will find a way to come out of this stronger and in better shape.

Mark B. Walter  
Town Administrator

860-228-0110  
townadministrator@columbiact.org

## COLUMBIA COMMUNITY GARDEN

### *Now is the time to plan your garden*

Happy New Year to All. The holidays are behind us and 2021 brings renewed hope after COVID 19. The thought of gardening seems a bit premature, but garden/seed catalogs are reappearing in mailboxes. Visions of flowers and vegetables dance in our heads. Gardeners are beginning to plan for their spring crops and outdoor camaradery will once again be possible. If you are looking to expand your horizons Columbia has just the spot.

The Columbia Community Garden located on Szegda Road offers a secure, sun filled, fenced area with water on site for each plot. With the 2019 expansion of the fenced area, there are now new plots of varying sizes

for residents and non-residents to rent through the Columbia Recreation Dept. NOW IS THE TIME TO START PLANNING A GARDEN. Contact the Rec. Department at 860 228-8513 or email to recreation@columbiact.org for more information about reserving a plot for to begin your gardening adventure. Make new friends, swap gardening stories, advice and plants with gardeners who have had plots since the garden was created in 2008. Gardening help and advice is never in short supply at the Columbia Community Garden.

Join a team of gardeners who, this past season, planted and donated crops to the Columbia Food Pantry and the Covenant Soup Kitchen.



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## Happy New Year!

As of January 1, 2021, admittance to the Town Clerk's office remains by appointment only. Please call our office at 860-228-3284 to set up an appointment.

### Permanent absentee ballots

An elector with a permanent physical disability, who is unable to appear in person at their poll on Election Day, may file an absentee ballot application along with a doctor's certificate (on letterhead) with the Town Clerk. This will place the elector on the Permanent Absentee Ballot list. A copy will be forwarded to the Registrar of Voters so that the permanent status can be noted on their registration. Throughout the year, for any election, primary or referendum, the Town Clerk will automatically mail an absentee ballot to the elector as soon as they become available. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

### Births-Deaths-Marriages

Certified copies of vital events such as births, deaths and marriages are available from the Town Clerk. A request

application and positive identification are necessary to obtain a certified copy. There is a fee of \$20.00 for each certified copy requested.

### Probate Court

Probate Court for Columbia is located in Manchester at 66 Center Street. Michael M. Darby is Probate Judge. If you have any questions, you can call their office at 860-647-3227, Monday thru Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Dogs

If you are new to Columbia and have not registered your dog with us or you have a new dog that is at least six months of age, please contact our office. You will need an updated rabies vaccination certificate and a spayed/neutered certificate, if applicable, to license your dog.

### Fishing and hunting

Sports licenses are available for purchase in the Town Clerk's office and on the DEEP website as well.

Robin M. Kenefick, *Columbia Town Clerk*

Gail C. McGrath, *Columbia Assistant Town Clerk*

## CONSERVATION AND AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

### New life for old farm

The new owner of 448 Route 87 is a commercial vegetable farmer. Susan Mitchell owns and operates Cloverleigh Farm, a certified organic farm that markets its produce through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Area residents can invest in the farm by purchasing a farm-share in advance of the growing season, and then receive weekly fresh produce from June through November. She also supplies several restaurants and the Willimantic Food Co-op with vegetables.



Cloverleigh Farm

Ms. Mitchell began Cloverleigh Farm in 2014. She most recently farmed on a few acres in Mansfield she rented from another farmer. First generation farmers like Susan have difficulty finding and affording good agricultural land to purchase. With a grant from The American Farmland Trust, she was able to hire a financial consultant, specializing in farms, to develop a business plan that helped her to take the next step and purchase her own farm in Columbia.

Susan is passionate about providing healthy nutrition



and education, connecting people to the source of their food. She is a member of the New CT Farmer Alliance (and co-founder), CT Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) and Connecticut Farm Bureau Association.

Columbia welcomes Susan Mitchell to our community, and we wish her well in in this chapter of her business.

Please visit [www.cloverleighfarm.com](http://www.cloverleighfarm.com) to read all the details about joining the CSA.

## Important change to tax deadlines

December 16, 2020, Governor Lamont signed Executive Order (EO) No. 9R. Section 1, Suspension and Modification of Tax Deadlines and Collection Efforts for Tax Bills That Become Due and Payable on January 1, 2021. EO No. 9R extends the grace period for the real estate, personal property and supplemental motor vehicle taxes that become due on January 1, 2021 only. What is “deferred” is not a tax but rather the last day to pay without interest. The deadline is deferred, not the tax. All taxpayers except for Landlords and escrowed accounts are eligible and are entitled to defer their payment deadline until April 1, 2021, instead of the usual 30 days.

Landlords, Financial Institutions and Mortgage Servicers that hold escrow funds will have the usual 30 days. The last day to pay without interest will be February 1, 2021.

EO 9R only applies to the taxes that are due on January 1, 2021. This EO does not cover any delinquent taxes or taxes that are/were due on any other date other than January 1, 2021.

Landlords must submit their application on or before February 1, 2021.

The Executive Order (EO) 9R states that in order to be eligible for the extended grace period/deferral program, a “landlord,” or “any taxpayer that rents or leases to any commercial, residential, or institutional tenant or lessee” shall “provide documentation to the municipality that the parcel has or will suffer a significant income decline or that commensurate forbearance was offered to their tenants or lessees. A taxpayer applicant is a “landlord” if he or she owns property that is rented or leased for any period which includes January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021.

Landlords can satisfy the commensurate forbearance and income decline requirements for tax and other relief under EO 9R for residential properties simply by providing documentation confirming the relief offered to the tenant, or by attesting to the relief in writing via written letter or in an e-mail to the tax collector. Landlords of commercial properties may satisfy these requirements with the documentation listed in the application form provided by OPM.

For the Deferment Program, the landlord must provide either 1) documentation that the property will suffer a significant revenue decline related to the COVID-19 emergency, or 2) that commensurate forbearance was offered to tenants or lessees. In either case, correspondence from the landlord confirming compliance will satisfy these prerequisites. Landlords are subject to auditing and may be asked by their municipality to provide their tenants’ names and contact information, or other information identified by the municipality to confirm eligibility.

Commensurate forbearance, for purposes of the program, means either a) for residential properties, correspondence from the landlord confirming that forbearance was offered or b) for commercial properties, either (i) a deferral of 25% of rent (approximating the property tax portion of rent) for three months from the due date, (ii) a deferral of one month’s rent to be paid over the three-month period; or (iii) forbearance substantially similar to (a) or (b) as determined by the tax collector.

Please go to the Town of Columbia’s website at <http://www.columbiact.org> and navigate to the Tax Office page for the fillable application.

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NOTE: Our office has relocated to 45 Laurel Lane  
Columbia, CT from the Landmark Building

*Legal Notice*  
*Columbia Board of Assessment Appeals*

In accordance with Section 12-110 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Columbia Board of Assessment Appeals will hold a public meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021 starting at 7:00 p.m. by appointment only via Zoom virtual platform for the purpose of hearing appeals related to the assessment of real estate, personal property and motor vehicles on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 and the Supplemental Grand List of October 1, 2019 in the Town of Columbia.

Appellants are encouraged to provide any documentation they believe support their appeal. Examples include, but are not limited to, real estate appraisal, bill of sale for real estate purchase, vehicle bill of sale and/or repair bills, photos showing condition of vehicle, and photo of odometer reading.

Complete applications and supporting documentation must be filed in writing and received no later than February 20, 2021.

The meeting agenda with appointment confirmation will be emailed prior to the meeting to applicants who have

filed applications in a timely manner. Please contact the Assessor at 860-228-9555 or email the Board Clerk at boardclerk@columbiact.org prior to the meeting for the link to join the virtual zoom meeting.

Applications are available in the Tax Assessor's Office or at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). Completed applications may be put in the Town Hall drop box (write "BAA application" on application envelope) or mailed to: Board of Assessment Appeals, Assessor's Office, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237.

Dated at Columbia, Connecticut this 4th day of January 2021.

Linda McDonald, *Chairman*

*Reminder from the Assessor's Office*

The Homeowners program will start accepting applications again as of February 1, 2021. If you are already in the program you will receive a letter from us reminding you to file. If you are not already in the program you will need to bring a copy of your 1040 income tax forms for 2020 to our office once they are completed or all your income information if you do not file income taxes. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 860-228-9555.



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## FRIENDS OF SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY

Hello and Happy New Year Fellow Columbia Residents!

We at Friends of the Library hope you all are staying healthy and that your holidays were joyful even if they were different than usual.

After much discussion and deliberation, we have unfortunately decided to cancel our February sale.

At this point, we are hoping and planning on a May sale.

We are missing all of you and each other terribly and hope that you will join us when we are finally up and running again.

Hopefully some of you had the chance to utilize the Book Nook and our Christmas collection in the Library before they had to go back to curbside pickup in November.

As of this writing, I'm not sure when the Library will re-open to patrons but be assured that if they do before we can re-open our book sale, we will once again update the Book Nook and make it available for your use.

Here's hoping for a wonderful Spring and the ability to get back to some normalcy!

Until then, stay safe and healthy.

Laurie Rogers, Secretary of Friends of the Library

## COLUMBIA'S MOBILE FOODSHARE

**Beckish Senior Center**  
188 Route 66, Columbia

**Every Other Thursday**

*Jan 14th, Jan 28th, Feb 11th, Feb 25th,  
Mar 11th, Mar 25th*

**1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

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**Monday-Friday 7am-6pm • [www.discoveryzone.info](http://www.discoveryzone.info)**

**Acorns?**

Emerson is credited as saying, ‘the creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.’ It’s been a tough year, a tough winter, and we are not done yet. But maybe this year has actually been a basket of acorns from which a great wealth of forests can grow? It’s been hard at the Library and still is, but we have also had many acorns sprout!

We would like to thank all who participated in our annual giving campaign. The list is too lengthy to include here, but your generosity and support was immeasurable. All have struggled (and the Library no different), but as we accepted donations - many from names we did not recognize - it not only gave us comfort in being able to continue our mission, but also the reassurance that we were not alone. An acorn was planted.

We would also like to thank those who have continued to participate in our virtual programs. From Arts & Crafts Take and Make Kits to Zoom book groups, we have appreciated the contact. For the past year we have continued to offer a minimum of three programs a week and for all

but about a month, we have provided access to materials 6 days a week. As we continue to do this, we would like to remind everyone: you can still get a library card and you may participate in our Zoom programs either by telephone only or video if you choose! More acorns planted!

The unique challenges of the past year have also encouraged us to get our creative juices flowing. Who could have imagined the Library would be providing patrons bags of materials in a garden shed? And since we’ve started exploring new ideas - more have come. Contact the Library to check out our new and improved Adult Winter Reading program, with more options and opportunities to win a prize! We’ve also created a new initiative we’ve named Discover, where we will encourage exploration, engagement and new experiences! Still more acorns planted!

Call the Library for more information (860.228.0350) or visit our Website ([www.columbiactlibrary.org](http://www.columbiactlibrary.org)). Don’t despair, we’re here for you!

Sue Epstein  
Library Director



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## SENIORS ON THE GO

I hope that all of you have had a wonderful holiday season and are enjoying some indoor time out of the cold and snow. I still miss seeing all of you, but I think the news is promising. The vaccine is being administered to seniors and hopefully that means that we can get together soon. I am looking forward to meals, trips, special events, and special group functions – all in accordance with town rules and guidance. Keep an eye out for the Gems newsletter and or the sign out by the road to let you know when things will start up again. I am hoping for a grand tag sale when we can do so, so keep saving those items for us. Some day I hope this unusual season of the pandemic will just be a memory. Hopefully, we just must be patient a little longer.

# 2021 VENZA

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Hello, My Columbia Seniors & Community Members,

Last January, I remember making so many wonderful plans for everyone here at the Beckish Senior Center. My plans were to bring in new day trips, exercise programs, art classes, games, and new lunch programs. However, everything was put on hold in March due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. The Beckish Senior Center took on many changes, but these new plans were not one of them. I am so grateful for all the hard work and dedication of all the Beckish Senior Center Staff and volunteers that have helped us throughout this very difficult year. From preparing and delivering meals, making endless wellness calls, and all the behind-the-scenes work to ensure our seniors and community members were not forgotten. I am sending positive vibes out for 2021, and I truly feel this will be the year of positive change. I believe 2021 will be the year we are all able to come together again in person to resume our fun activities here at Beckish.

I am sure all of you have so many questions and concerns about the new vaccines. Who will notify us? How and where will they be administered? What age groups

will be first? I can assure you that as soon as I have all the information, I will notify each and every one of you who are eligible. According to Eastern Highlands Health District, the timing is anywhere from February to April for vaccine availability for seniors. You can go to their website for more information at: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---Phases>

There are many questions regarding tax preparation this year. We will not be providing tax preparation to our seniors this year. We are still closed to the public and will notify you if there are any changes to this statement.

The Beckish Senior Center Staff would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! We also send healthy positive vibes to you and your family.

Happy New Year and remember to be kind to others and first and foremost to yourself!

Much Love & Happiness,

Bernadette Derring  
 Director Senior Services & Transportation  
 Town of Columbia



## What should you look for in your loved ones in this new year?

- 🔴 Is their home environment well-maintained?
- 🔴 Do you see any unopened mail or unpaid bills?
- 🔴 How is their balance and mobility?
- 🔴 Do you notice any weight loss?
- 🔴 Are they experiencing loneliness?
- 🔴 Are they taking their medications?

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**Chris Rice, Service Manager**  
contact@tireandbrakeclinic.com

### Preparing for a House Fire

Install appropriate smoke alarms throughout your home. Test these alarms once a month and change the batteries at least twice a year. Any devices that are 10+ years old should be completely replaced.

Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what to do when they hear one.

Have a household exit plan and establish a family meeting spot outside of your home.

Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL if their clothes should catch on fire.

Consider storing copies of your current insurance policies and other important documents in a secure, remote location. Having an extra set of car keys at this location may be helpful as well.

In the unfortunate event of a house fire, get out of your home immediately.

- Priority is you get yourself and your family members out as quickly as possible – do not attempt to collect your valuables.
- Notify all other occupants and account for everyone once outside.
- Call 9-1-1 and give the dispatcher as much information as possible.
- Never re-enter your home for anything.
- When the Fire Department arrives, communicate if everyone is accounted for and if there are any special hazards, e.g., guns, ammunition, propane gas, or lost pets.
- Try to remain calm.

After the fire, there will be an investigation to determine the cause and origin of your house fire. You will need to contact your insurance company. Be mindful when signing any contracts for cleanup services.

Please feel free to contact the Fire Marshal or Fire Department if you ever have any questions or concerns regarding fire prevention and safety.

## COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department has had a very busy year. As of December 28, CVFD members have responded to 753 calls, an increase from 642 calls in 2019. Officers have been focused on planning and preparing to respond to calls under new guidelines and precautions designed to keep members of the department and the community safe.

The CVFD has three newly elected/appointed officers leading the operations of the department.

Chief Stephen Postemsky, born and raised in Columbia, is a career firefighter in Hamden and joined the CVFD in 2000. He has held the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain and Deputy Chief before being voted in as Chief this past fall. Stephen holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of New Haven, majoring in fire administration and arson investigation and minoring in criminal justice. He is Deputy Fire Marshal in Columbia and Andover and teaches at the Eastern Fire School.

Deputy Chief Scott Haddad, EMT and firefighter, has lived in Columbia since 1996 and joined the CVFD the same year. Scott became a Lieutenant in 2001, a Captain in 2007 and held the position of Assistant Chief from 2009–2020, until being voted in as Deputy Chief this past fall. In 2017, Scott established the Cadet Program for young members aged 16 and over. Scott's son, Nick, is currently a Cadet and his son, Jon is a CVFD member. Scott is the manager of the Public

Safety Emergency Communications Center at UConn. Scott is very grateful to his wife, Becky, for her understanding and support of his time dedicated to the CVFD over the years.

Assistant Chief Jeff Lewis was born and raised in Columbia and has held all officer positions up to Chief over the 28 years he has been a member. Jeff was appointed to Assistant Chief by Chief Postemsky in November. Jeff is a firefighter and EMT and is also Secretary of the CVFD. The responsibility for training falls under Jeff's purview, planning skills training for firefighters and emergency medical service providers. Jeff works as a network designer for Cox Communications.

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### Snow Removal Rules:

- Make sure that your roadside trash bins stay on private property and do not venture out into the road. The Town is not liable for any damage as a result of bins that get damaged by passing traffic.
- Refrain from plowing and blowing snow into or across roadways or onto town rights-of-way. Doing so creates unsafe conditions for drivers and vehicles.
- Refrain from parking in town roadways or in Municipal and School parking lots during snow events.
- Refrain from using snowmobiles, using all-terrain vehicles and engaging in snow skiing on town roadways.

**MAILBOXES:** As a courtesy to our taxpayers the Town will replace mailboxes on town roads that have been determined by the Public Works Department to have been rendered unusable by damage from snowplow contact from a town truck. Such box and post must have been in sound condition prior to incident. Replacement will be in accordance with USPS Standard 7B01 and a 4x4 post.

Replacement will occur after winter season and subject to DPW work schedule. If resident has an expensive box, the town will either replace as stated above or issue a check for \$25.00.

Please check your mailbox and post to make sure both are secure. You may also want to install a secured protective shield to deflect the snow from the mailbox and post.

**SAND:** Free sand (up to 2 five-gallon containers) is available to residents during the winter months located behind the Swap Shop at the Transfer Station. Residents must provide their own container for the sand. The Transfer Station is open on Wednesday's and Saturday's from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

**BAIT BUCKET DISPOSAL CATCH BASIN AVAILABLE FOR ICE FISHERMEN:** Please use the bait bucket disposal catch basin located in the parking lot in of the Murphy House. Please do not throw any bait on the beach or in the lake.

## HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL

### Porter Pals preschool lottery registration

If you have a child that will be turning 3 or 4 years old by Dec. 31, 2021 and would like them to be considered for the lottery, please go to [www.columbiapublicschools.org](http://www.columbiapublicschools.org) and click on Student Services. Under the Student Services tab, please click on Pre-School Porter Pals. There will be a link to register your child. We will be holding the Lottery on Tuesday, March 30. If your child will be turning 5 prior to Dec. 31, 2021, then your child is eligible for Kindergarten and not Preschool. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585.

### Preschool screenings

The Early Childhood Team of Horace W. Porter School is pleased to announce that we will conduct Preschool Screenings for Columbia 3-year-old (turning 3 by December 31, 2020) and any 4-year-old not previously screened (and not turning 5 by December 31, 2020). Please call Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585 if you would like your child to be screened. All public-school systems in Connecticut are responsible for the identification of children who may be eligible to receive special education services. The early childhood team in Colum-

bia offers preschool developmental screenings for current resident children. The purpose of this screening is to collect information about each preschooler's early development in the areas of cognition, communication, motor functioning, and social interaction. This will help us to determine whether your child needs any special services in order to prepare for school success.

If you have concerns about a child that has not yet turned 3, please contact the CT Birth-to-Three program at (800) 505-7000.

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## FROM SUPERINTENDENT MARIA GERYK

My hope for all of you as we enter 2021 is a year filled with good health, peace, and happiness. For educators, 2020 has proven to be a year of unexpected challenges and new learning as we've navigated educating students during this pandemic. I am thankful for our wonderful students, families, staff, and community who have worked together so diligently to keep our schools as healthy as possible and active for learning. Our students are resilient and have overall adjusted well to the "new normal." It has been wonderful to see them happily coming to school and working well in Porter classrooms.

As we continue to live and work through this health crisis, we adapt our learning environment based on current information about the virus, and the numbers of confirmed cases in our school and community. While challenging for families, students, and staff, we have transitioned smoothly between hybrid and remote learning models as necessary to address needs and to continue student learning. We have experienced a number of positive COVID cases in our school community, however, we have not identified any school transmissions at this time.

Our mitigation strategies of appropriate hand hygiene, physical distancing, strong ventilation, cohorting, and enhanced cleaning have thankfully supported a healthy learning environment for our students and a healthy work environment for our staff.

Our high school aged students have continued their education through accessing the innovative hybrid and remote models provided by our high school partners. I am grateful for the collaborative partnership with area superintendents as we work together to identify best practice and strategies to employ during this uncharted experience.

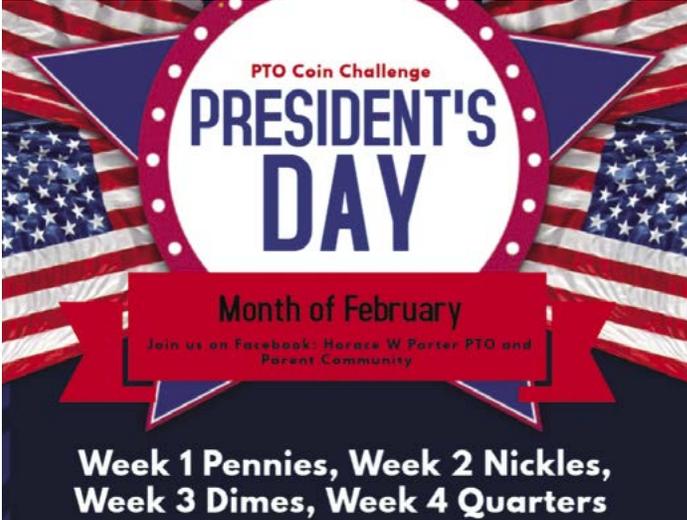
In addition to challenges, there are many student and staff celebrations to acknowledge. Today, I would like to recognize our 2020-2021 Teacher of the Year, Kristen Maltese and Paraeducator of the Year, Kathy Edenburn. We thank you both for your ongoing dedication to the students of Porter School!

Our Board of Education has continued its work during the pandemic by meeting via Zoom. They have recently welcomed two new members, Christine Sposito and Arthur Rowbotham to the board. A communication subcommittee has been formed to better understand how the board connects and communicates with the community.

Please feel free to connect to share your thoughts and suggestions by calling 860-228-8590 or through email at [mgeryk@hwporter.org](mailto:mgeryk@hwporter.org) Please visit our website at: <http://www.hwporter.org/index.php>

Happy New Year Columbia!

## COLUMBIA PTO



**PTO Coin Challenge**  
**PRESIDENT'S DAY**  
Month of February  
Join us on Facebook: Horace W Porter PTO and Parent Community  
**Week 1 Pennies, Week 2 Nickles, Week 3 Dimes, Week 4 Quarters**



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### Church names new settled pastor

The Columbia Congregational Church is pleased to announce the call of a new settled pastor, MaryAnn Purtill. Pastor MaryAnn has a Masters of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School and was ordained as a UCC minister in 2013. She begins her service in Columbia in mid-February.

The search committee worked long and hard to present MaryAnn as the selected candidate. A search for a new Pastor is never an easy task but this search was more challenging due to the Covid19 pandemic. Members of the search committee, led by David Coley, are to be commended for their perseverance and diligence in seeking our settled pastor.

MaryAnn grew up on the east end of Long Island, married and moved to Connecticut. She has one son who currently resides in Puerto Rico. Prior to coming to her call to the ministry, she worked in technology in the finance industry and eventually co-owned a small service business.

After coming to Connecticut, MaryAnn became actively involved with the United Church of Christ. She served as an administrator and participated as an active lay member in many aspects of the church. She particularly enjoyed and grew in her spiritual journey after leading a three-week adult mission program in Malawi, Africa working at St. Mary's Orphanage.

While attending seminary, she was a student intern at Windsor Congregational Church, a chaplain at Hartford Hospital, and Director of Christian Edition at St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury. Prior to coming to Columbia, Pastor MaryAnn was the sole Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Marian, Massachusetts.

The search committee and congregation members were very impressed with MaryAnn's enthusiasm and commitment to being an active member of the community, bringing together those of different backgrounds, and providing services to those in need.

We welcome MaryAnn to her new pastorship and encourage community members to get to know her. Do not hesitate to seek her assistance and/or guidance or to just say hello. MaryAnn looks forward to being an active member of the Columbia family.

Carmen L. Vance, *President*  
Church Council  
Columbia Congregational Church

### Columbia Cardless Holiday Fund 2020

The following people made donations to the Columbia Cardless Holiday Fund 2020 in lieu of sending holiday greeting cards. We thank them for their generosity in helping their neighbors in need. This fund is sponsored by the Columbia Congregational Church and is used year round to help Columbia residents.

Ralph J. Noli	Mahlon and Cathy Gilbert
Richard and Marjorie Ranger	The Pearce and Maheu Family
Audrey M. Tuttle	Andrea Stannard
Carmen L. Vance	Diana, Andrew and Emil Sadlon
Donna Vose	Sally and Richard Ruef
The Narkawicz Family	Millie and Paul Ramsey
Lou and Karen Scotti	Belle Robinson
Velvet Welch	Rick and Elaine Carone
Eric Christiana and Dawne Termini	George and Gerry Wil- liams
Debby and Mark Smith	



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## CLA Welcomes All Town Residents

Do you have an interest in learning about, protecting and preserving one of our town's beautiful natural assets, Columbia Lake in addition to enjoying it recreationally? Consider joining the CLA, the Columbia Lake Association. Participation is open to all town residents.

The CLA came about in the 1940's primarily as a social and recreational organization. It evolved from the 1970's through 2020 to become an integral partner with the Town of Columbia to protect and preserve the lake. In the last five years the CLA expanded its mission and broadened its charter to allow all town residents to be a part of the association. Since 2015 the CLA updated its bylaws in meaningful ways including:

1. Recognizing in its mission the need to protect and preserve Columbia Lake and its watershed area. The watershed is the area of land surrounding Columbia Lake where water drains into the lake. The CLA mission now includes preserving the ecological, environmental and property interests and values of Columbia

Lake and its watershed area.

2. Understanding the importance of Columbia Lake to our town, the CLA created participation opportunities for watershed property owners and other town residents interested in being involved in the CLA and supporting its mission.
3. Passing an amendment on November 19, 2020 allowing broader representation on the CLA board of directors.

These changes enable the CLA to better protect our lake and watershed area and to build collaborations with the entire town community to ensure we all enjoy the lake today and well into the future. To learn more about and/or join the CLA contact us at [columbialakeassociation@gmail.com](mailto:columbialakeassociation@gmail.com).

S.A.I.L with the CLA~ Socialize, Advocate, Influence and Learn!

Mary Roickle  
CLA President



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# COLUMBIA TOWN DIRECTORY

DEPARTMENT		OFFICE HOURS	PHONE
<b>Administrative Office:</b>			
First Selectman	Steven M. Everett	Mon–Thur 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-0110
Town Administrator	Mark B. Walter	Fri 8 am – Noon	
Executive Administrative Assistant	Jennifer C. LaVoie		
<b>Assessor's Office:</b>			
Assessor	Mary Lavallee	Mon–Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-9555
Assistant Assessor	Marcy Littlefield	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
		Fri 8 am – Noon	
<b>Beckish Senior Center:</b>			
Director	Bernadette Derring	Mon–Fri 8 am – 3 pm	860-228-0759
Van Dispatcher/Program Assistant	Margaret Verizzi		
<b>Social Services:</b>			
Community Social Services Coordinator	Katie Wilt	Mon & Tues 8:30 am – 5 pm	860-228-1008
<b>Building Department:</b>			
Building Official	Jason Nowasad	Mon–Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-0440
Zoning Enforcement	Connie Kisluk	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
Town Planner	Paula Stahl	Fri 8 am – Noon	
Sanitarian	Glenn Bagdoian		
Inland Wetlands Agent	John Valente		
Administrative Assistant	Terri Lasota		
Board Secretary	Flo Polek		
Fire Marshal/Burning Official	Michael Lester		
Assistant Burning Official	Steven Postemsky		
Assistant to Building Official			
<b>Animal Control:</b>			
Animal Control Officer	Marc Volza		860-337-1222
<b>Facilities Department:</b>			
Facilities Manager	Jason Nowasad	Mon–Fri 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-4270
Facilities Maintainer	Daniel Johnson		860-228-4270 ext. 111
<b>Finance Department:</b>			
Finance Director	Beverly Ciurylo	Mon–Thur 8 am – 4:30 pm	860-228-8423
Accountant/Payroll Specialist	Lisa Rose	Fri 8 am – Noon	860-228-8423
Accounting Assistant	Jill Swenson		860-228-8423
<b>Fire Department:</b>			
To report a fire			911
Non-emergency calls			860-228-9602
Fire Chief	Steven Postemsky		
Assistant Fire Chief	Jeff Lewis		
Deputy Fire Chief	Scott Haddad		
<b>Public Works Department:</b>			
Director	Beth Lunt	Mon–Fri 6:30 am – 3 pm	860-228-4270
<b>Recreation Department:</b>			
Recreation Director	Marc Volza	Mon–Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-8513
		Thur 8 am – 7 pm	
		Fri CLOSED	
<b>Registrar of Voters:</b>			
Democrat Registrar	Karen Butzgy	Varies	860-228-0110
Republican Registrar	Kate Morrison		
<b>Resident State Trooper:</b>			
	Gregory DeCarli	Mon–Fri 6:30 am – 3 pm	860-228-9846
	Dispatch		860-465-5400
<b>Tax Collector's Office:</b>			
Tax Collector	Carol W. Price	Mon–Wed 8 am – 2 pm	860-228-0230
		Thur 8 am – 6 pm, Fri CLOSED	
		<i>extended hours in January and July</i>	
<b>Town Clerk's Office:</b>			
Town Clerk	Robin M. Kenefick	Mon–Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-3284
Assistant Town Clerk	Gail McGrath	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
		Fri 8 am – Noon	
<b>Transfer Station:</b>			
Transfer Station Attendants	Jacob Osborne & Tristan Kandolin	Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-4270
		Sat 8 am – 4 pm	

With winter upon us, the AHM Board extends best New Year wishes to Columbia residents. The past year brought many challenges to our communities. Hopefully better days are coming soon. AHM Executive Director Tressa Giordano, summed it up best: “2020 impacted so many people locally. I am proud of our community partners that worked with AHM this past year making sure that the needs of the residents we help remains our highest priority.”

The last twelve months brought many volunteers and staff together working on projects that benefited the communities. One project was the front-line hero’s lawn sign fundraiser that raised \$6000 for Columbia, Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough food pantries. A Cigna Foundation grant funded a new AHM initiative called Health Matters, which provides residents of all ages with access to physical and positive mental health activities. AHM’s counselor at the Horace Porter School and our AHM community counselors helped children, teens and families coping with anxiety, depression, and isolation during the pandemic. AHM teen workers supported local seniors with household projects, which in Columbia

is called TASKs. The Family Resource Center provided childcare and family development services for children and families living in the four-town region. The CHEC Coalition drug task force held its most successful drug Take Back event in partnership with the CT. State Police and local schools. During the year AHM conducted a virtual youth theater workshop series in partnership with Playhouse on Park. For Columbia families please watch for details on future theater programs for your children. Of special note, AHM staff member, Brendan Grimm, continues to assist Columbia Residents through your food bank on a weekly basis.

Please remember AHM staff are just a phone call away at 860-228-9488, whether you need help finding a family resource, are a young adult or family member interested in SMART recovery groups or family counseling, or are a senior looking for help through the TASKs program and many other activities. These services and more can be found at [www.ahmyouth.org](http://www.ahmyouth.org)

AHM Youth and Family Services is a 501C-3 public charity serving Andover, Columbia, Hebron and Marlborough.

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### *Columbia's Early Nurserymen*

Of the world's 7500 varieties of apples and 3000 varieties of pears, the Columbia Hyde apple (c. 1830) and controversial Pinneo pear (c. 1745) are documented in the authoritative annals of the U.S. Department of Agriculture by pomologist W. H. Ragan (1905, 1908).

Our colonial ancestors experimented with their precious Old World apple, pear, plum, and cherry seeds and pits on their Connecticut farmsteads. Young trees were carefully observed for hardiness and quality of fruit for cider, perry, cooking and eating. An exceptional young fruit tree would be propagated by grafting. Grafting remains the primary means of propagation as apple and pear seeds rarely express the same attributes of the parent tree.

Several indigenous North American "crab apple" varieties grew in the area, but their small hard fruit was just not suitable for cidery. Believed to be among oldest locally originated all-purpose "juicy" apple in New England, the Rhode Island Greening (c. 1650) was grown from seed by Mr. Green, tavern owner in Middletown, Rhode Island. Here as elsewhere in New England, cider mills operated on Columbia's farms including those of Deacon Pinneo (1740), Eleazar Wheelock (1760), Asahel Clarke (1807), and Justin Isham (1910). Hard cider was the beverage of choice during the early 1800s and continued to be consumed until the U.S. constitutional ban on alcoholic beverages (1918 - 1933) known as Prohibition.

Mr. Glen Nicholes Jr., owner of "Refound Farm", formerly Asahel Clarke's farm on Route 87, Columbia, informed me



his ancestor Nathaniel Hyde of Chestnut Hill originated the dessert and eating Columbia Hyde apple in 1830. It is known by other historic names: Hyde, Granny Hyde, and Columbia. The Hyde family's original farmland is owned by the Deputa family today. Yet the Hyde's may have been inspired by an earlier generation of nurserymen including Edward and Eliphalet Yeomans who discovered and cultivated the Columbia Sweet apple in the late 1700s on their farms near today's Lake Road and West Street. A Columbia Sweet tree was still growing in this district in 1905.

Deacon Pinneo of Chestnut Hill grew cider apples but is known to have cultivated a hardy, prolific, "pearmain" or "long-keeping fruit" pear tree in 1745. Like other colonial nurserymen of his day, he generously gave away saplings to friends and neighbors in Connecticut. The tree was known as the

Pinneo pear according to a letter by John S. Yeomans of Columbia in 1845 to the journal "The Albany Cultivator". Yeomans wrote the original tree was still standing in Columbia. A sapling of this pear tree was re-discovered as "a new native tree", rebranded, propagated and sold by a prominent Massachusetts nurseryman in 1850s as the Boston pear. Other (controversial) historic names are: Early Denzelona, Graves, Hebron, Lebanon, Penneo, Summer Virgalieu, Virgalieu, and Silliman's Russet. Some years ago Mr. Dick Szegda showed me an ancient pear tree still producing fruit on his property. Curiously it fits the description of the Pinneo pear.

Ingrid Wood  
Town Historian

## FROM KATIE WILT, COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR

Dear Columbia Residents,

We have collected an A-Z sampling of support resources that can be accessed on our website at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). Click on the Community Social Services tab under departments for the full list. You may find something helpful for you, a family member, or a neighbor. Knowledge is power!

This is a not an exhaustive list. For further information on a topic or for information on a topic not listed, visit or call 211, United Way <https://www.211ct.org/> 24/7.

For assistance in navigating programs, or if there is another need, please contact me, Katie Wilt, Town of Columbia Community Social Services Coordinator, at 860-228-1008 or [kwilt@columbiact.org](mailto:kwilt@columbiact.org) (Typical hours Monday & Tuesday 8:30-5:00).

Additionally, contact me to:

- Talk with a social worker
- Receive guidance/advocacy with eligibility/benefits/heating needs
- Learn about what programs you may qualify for
- Get referrals to appropriate programs/services

## Industry and Commerce in Lebanon Crank

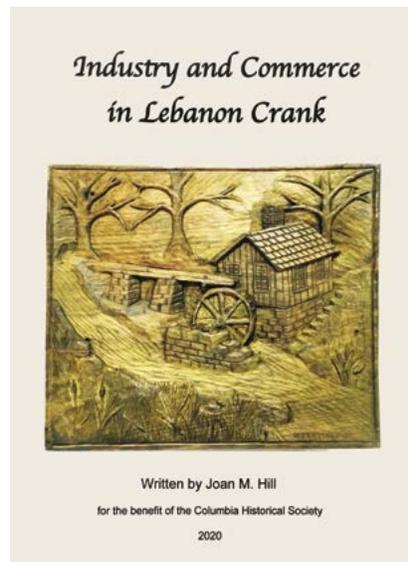
Joan Hill has written a book about industry and commerce in Lebanon Crank during the 18th century. You will learn what industries were established and where they were located. It is also important to understand who invested in Lebanon Crank and purchased the land to build the industries and what skills were needed to operate the mills. That experience and knowledge gave birth to the Industrial Revolution. Those that lived here learned how to market their resources.

The Crank mills needed to be water-powered therefore an investor needed to evaluate each stream and river to determine if there was sufficient waterflow to run their waterwheel. It was the millwright's job to assess the suitability of the site and design, plan and oversee the building of the mill and its machinery. It was important to have an experienced millwright among the earliest settlers of our community. Other members of the community would apprentice for him to learn the skill.

The Crank had many different mills during the 18th century. The first sawmill was built on the Ten Mile River which is just above Cards Mill Rd. The river had a year-round flow of water which descended through a rocky ravine in a series of small waterfalls. This site was so outstanding that it continued to host water-powered mills into the 20th century.

The erection of the grist mill to grind grain into flour was the next industrial priority for the Crank. It was very laborious to do hand-milling and there was an incentive to establish this type of mill. The Woodworth Grist Mill was built in 1719 on the Ten Mile River. The river was dammed which raised the height of the water that was being fed into the mill.

There were other mills that were built at this time. The Tannery provided an important service for the Crank. This mill turned raw animal hides into leather that could be used for britches, aprons, saddles etc. The Iron Works was needed to create farm tools such as plows and scythes, shoes for oxen and horses as well as nails and machinery. The malthouse prepared beverages such as



ale and beer. At that time, germs were not yet understood, and the purity of water was suspect therefore beverages had to be boiled for safety. The production of cloth was another top priority in The Crank. By 1804, The residents were interested in utilizing machinery to card, spin, felt and full the raw materials on hand into usable fabric. The fulling mill was established to clean and compact the fibers and shear the surface to create a soft and thick cloth. A spinning mill would convert the raw fabric into yarn or thread which shortened the time to prepare the yarn.

By reading this book, you can learn how Potash was developed and what it was used for. The last textile industry that arose in The Crank was hat-making. The hat-making industry in The Crank was one of the first in the colonies. You can also view the map of commercial sites that developed in The Crank. This enabled the settlers to move beyond a mere subsistence economy while they marketed their resources and products beyond the town's borders.

I have offered a brief summary of this interesting historical book. I ask you to purchase it so that you can better understand Industry and Commerce the 18th century in Columbia. You may contact Judy Ortiz at 860 208-9881 if you wish to have your own copy. The proceeds benefit the Columbia Historical Society. Joan Hill has provided a great service to the Town of Columbia and we should thank her for the extensive time that she has spent doing the research and accurately compiling this data.

Judith Ortiz

## Wanted – Vintage Lunch Pails

The Columbia Historical Society wants to add some vintage lunch pails to its one-room schoolhouse (aka the Indian School). Any small tin pail with lid and handle will do - old lard can, etc. If you have one to donate or possibly sell to us, please contact Joan Hill at 860-228-2849 or [jhill003@charter.net](mailto:jhill003@charter.net).



## VOLUNTEERS SPRUCE UP BECKISH SENIOR CENTER

### *What do Community Spirit, Soil and Children have in common? Enthusiasm, Vitality and Daffodils*

Home schoolers Gunnar Christensen - age 8, Landon - age 8 and Ella Parks - age 5, along with boys and girls from Scout Troop - Columbia Pack 62 brought their enthusiasm to the Beckish Senior Center in early November. The newly replanted gardens in front of the building and down the hillside provided the soil. Daffodil bulbs came courtesy of relocation efforts from gardens in the center of town and the Murphy House/Columbia Lake Beach.

Civic minded parents joined their children in a community service project planting well over 100 bulbs. The bulbs are the off springs of daffodils planted during other community service projects undertaken by volunteers over 20 years ago! Community service projects have enjoyed a long, successful heritage in Columbia.

Daffodils, also known as jonquils or daffadowndillies were brought to the U.S. by early settlers and have naturalized throughout the states. For many the daffodil is a breath of new spring air, bringing HOPE, renewal and vitality, creativity, JOY, inspiration, inner reflection and forgiveness.



In the world of flowers, the yellow daffodil means strength, overcoming obstacles and the arrival of success and wealth.

The orange daffodil represents joy, vitality and enthusiasm. It expresses ones need to be more positive and thankful for everything we have.

Did you know that the daffodil is the official symbol for the American Cancer Association symbolizing HOPE for a cure? It is also the flower of the month for March and the symbol for a 10th wedding anniversary.

Keep a wondering eye out for the first blooms of spring at the Beckish Senior Center. Will they be orange or yellow or some of each? Each bloom lasts for about 20 days so be sure not to miss them. With the symbolism of the daffodil in mind let's welcome 2021 with open hearts and minds.

From Millie Ramsey

## COLUMBIA LEOS

Happy New Year from the Columbia Leos! We extend best wishes to all for a safe and healthy 2021 as we continue to deal with the pandemic. And in spite of the pandemic, the Columbia Leos are trying their best to stay active! The Leos meet via Zoom on the first and third Monday's of the month. Please email Advisor Jim Blair at [jbland15@earthlink.net](mailto:jbland15@earthlink.net) if you would like to participate. We are always looking for new members. Our requirements are ages 12-18, and Columbia residents.

This past fall we had our most successful coat drive to date! We were out in front of the old firehouse and the town's response was incredible! All the coats were given to WAIM in Willimantic with an assist from Shirley King, a volunteer at WAIM. Thanks Shirley!

We also collected food which was given to our Columbia Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is located at the Senior Center and is managed by Senior Center Director, Bernadette Derring. Bernadette and her crew of volunteers have been doing an outstanding job since the start of the shut downs back in March of 2020. Many thanks to her!

This year we will continue with our food collection. The need has not eased, and for the time being, Bernadette could really use our help! We are also trying to help the Town's Fuel Assistance Program. We will accept any donations, cash or check, large or small, to pass along to this extremely important program. Look for us to be at the Senior Center starting on January 9th. We'll post dates on the Town Board and Facebook on the Everything Columbia page.

The Columbia Leos wish to thank all who have stepped up and helped us with our causes. If not for the incredible generosity of Columbia residents, we would not be able to do so much. We will continue to do our best as we lift each other up through these difficult times.

Contact Information:

Lion Jim Blair

Advisor

860-428-2916

[Jbland15@earthlink.net](mailto:Jbland15@earthlink.net)



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