

COLUMBIA



UPDATE FEBRUARY 2023



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN & TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Several key projects were completed in 2022 significantly contributing to the growth and quality of our Town. Additionally, some projects were started in 2022 and are well on their way to completion in 2023. Projects of note include:

Safety Changes to State Roads through Columbia – The Board of Selectmen approved important safety changes to the intersection of Route 66 and Hunt/West St. Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) installed new opposing left turn lanes. The existing conditions cause sight-line blockage when two opposing left-turning vehicles on Route 66 are stopped at this intersection, leading to high-speed collisions with oncoming traffic. The left turn lanes will now align left turning vehicles so that each direction can see oncoming traffic, resulting in safer traffic operation.

Elimination of Passing Zone by the Main Moose on Route 66: A request was sent from the Town to ConnDOT to eliminate a dangerous passing zone in front of the Main Moose on Route 66. During ConnDOT's repaving project on Route 6 & 66 they agreed to take out the dangerous passing zone.

Erdoni Road Culvert Repair Project: The Department of Public Works repaired twin culverts on Erdoni Road. The project included excavation, mortaring the head walls, adding hydraulic cement to fill to top of road, and adding asphalt to complete road repair. The road repair took less than a week and was all done in-house providing significant savings to the town.

Cards Mill Road Improvement Project: Portions of Cards Mill Road from Route 66 to the intersection of Baker Hill Road were milled and paved.

Construction of Department of Public Works Office Building: The Board of Selectmen granted approval for the construction of the DPW office building and all associated work and site improvements. Construction will start in early 2023. The building will have a conference/training room, DPW Director's office, and another work station area for a foreman. There will be a breakroom, locker room with sinks, toilets and a shower and an ADA non-gendered restroom with a shower. The multi-purpose office will provide our dedicated DPW crew the ability to conduct vital functions as well as modernize the current office amenities that are in place. This project was funded through the American Rescue Plan Funds.



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Recreation Park: The following Recreation Park projects were completed.

- New pavilion construction completed with concession stand, handicap bathrooms, and storage for the Recreation Department, Little League, and the Soccer League.
- Grading and milling of parking lot.
- Gate installed to prevent cars from going behind the concession stand.
- Guardrail installation project in front of the girls' softball field.
- Maintenance Garage was completed which houses all the grounds maintenance equipment.

All the above projects with the exception of the Maintenance Garage were funded through the American Rescue Plan Funds.

Columbia Volunteer Fire Department Upgrade to Mobile and Portable Radios and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Phone System: The upgrade to the mobile and portable radios will provide improved communications for the Department of Public works, Emergency Management, Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD), and the State Police. The upgrade was funded with the American Rescue Plan Funds.

The CVFD is also upgrading the old phone system to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Phone System. Improving the audio-visual training equipment will provide better communication with agencies during major storm events and allow volunteers to conduct their training remotely. The VoIP system was also funded with American Rescue Plan Funds.

HVAC and Exhaust System Upgrade to CVFD Building: The CVFD has received the necessary exhaust system upgrades to better vent the fire and ambulance bays. Four HVAC heating and cooling units and being installed this month. This project was funded by the American Rescue Plan Funds.



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

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Permitlink Permitting Software: Permitlink is a cloud-based permitting software that provides residents with an efficient and convenient way to remotely submit permits to the building department and the health district.

HVAC Systems for the Town Hall and Murphy House: Installation of HVAC systems at the Town Hall and the Murphy House (located at the beach) were completed. These projects were funded by the American Rescue Plan Funds.

Community Social Services "The More you Know" series: Columbia Social Services Senior implemented "The More you Know" program series in June. This wellness series aims to educate, connect, and support our community's mental and physical health.

Revaluation: A full revaluation for Grant List 2021 billable in July 2022 for taxes, resulting in a reduced Mil Rate from 29.33% to 25.87%

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations: Eversource and United Illuminating, as well as funds available as part of the US settlement with Volkswagen will be provide grant funding for Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations. Eversource grant funding has been approved. Eversource will contribute approximately \$20,000 for the EV charging stations at each site. The town is waiting to hear from the Volkswagen settlement funding to see if that has been approved. EV charging stations upon approval of the Board of Selectmen may be placed at the Town of Columbia Parks and Recreation building, the Beckish Senior Center, Columbia Town Hall, Horace W. Porter School, the Saxton B. Little Free Library, and the Department of Public Works garage.

History Place Masonry Repairs: The History Place received important masonry repairs to maintain the safety and integrity of the building.

Beckish Senior Center Programs: Digital Literacy Program and R U Ok Program - The Beckish Senior Center started the Digital Literacy Program in February 2022 with a generous donation from Spectrum Communications. Spectrum donated 10 Chrome books to the Beckish Senior Center to be used for the digital literacy program.



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The R U OK Program is a free service that the town provides establishing a prearranged time for participants to receive a regular phone call inquiring about their welfare. During the call participants are asked "Are You OK?" If they answer "yes" they may simply hang up and continue with their day. If a concern is expressed, the volunteer caller will determine the nature of the concern and if some sort of response is necessary. Unanswered calls or busy signals are called back. If there is still no response after multiple tries, the volunteer caller may request that an officer be dispatched to the location for a safety check.

What we have done this past year reflects the hard work from all our elected officials, volunteers, and town departments that provide exceptional service to Columbia and its residents.

FY 23/24 BUDGET SEASON: Now begins the time and commitment of our Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and Financial Planning and Allocation Commission working with our employees to prepare a budget to present in our public meetings. Budget presentations by the Superintendent of the Horace W. Porter School and the Town Administrator to the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FiPAC) will be held on 3/15/23 at 7:00 PM. FiPAC will have a budget workshops on 3/22/23 and 3/29/23, 4/5/23 (tentative), 4/12/23 (tentative) at their scheduled Special Meeting. The Public Hearing on the budget with a FiPAC Special Meeting to follow will be held on 4/26/23.

The Annual Town Budget Meeting will be called by the Board of Selectmen per the Charter between the 2nd Tuesday of May and the 1st Tuesday of June. The date of the Annual Town Budget Meeting will be posted on the town's website at www.columbiact.org and at the Town Clerk's Office.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett, First Selectman

severett@columbiact.org

&

Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator

townadministrator@columbiact.org

860-228-0110



Find us on 

UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

Many meetings will be held by utilizing remote access; however, some meetings are being held in-person. Please check the Town calendar and the Agenda posted for directions on login information if virtual, or the meeting location if in person. Each board or committee will provide the information needed to join using an on-line conferencing platform. Please check the Town of Columbia's [website](#) for updates.

UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

- 2/01/23 Wed: Lake Management Advisory Committee, 7:00 PM
- 2/06/23 Tue: Board of Education, 7:00 PM
- 2/06/23 Mon: Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, 7:00 PM
- 2/06/23 Mon: Horace Porter School HVAC Building Committee, 6:00 PM
- 2/07/23 Tue: Board of Selectmen, 7:00 PM
- 2/08/23 Wed: Fiscal Policy Board, 8:30 AM
- 2/08/23 Wed: Economic Development Commission, 7:00 PM
- 2/13/23 Mon: Horace Porter School HVAC Building Committee, 6:00 PM
- 2/13/23 Mon: Planning & Zoning Commission, 7:00 PM
- 2/15/23 Wed: Financial Planning & Allocation Commission, 7:00 PM
- 2/16/23 Thur: Open Space Committee, 9:00 AM
- 2/20/23 Mon: Horace Porter School HVAC Building Committee, 6:00 PM
- 2/21/23 Tue: Hop River Preserve Committee, 5:30 PM
- 2/21/23 Tue: Board of Selectmen, 7:00 PM
- 2/23/23 Thur: Zoning Board of Appeals, 7:00 PM
- 2/27/23 Mon: Planning & Zoning Commission, 7:00 PM

Public Comment will be accepted by our dedicated email at PublicInput@columbiact.org or by USPS mail to 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).



TOWN OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED FOR PRESIDENT'S DAY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2023



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER:

The Beckish Senior Center is hosting AARP's FREE Tax Preparation



- Every Other Thursday from 9am to 12pm
- February 2nd & 16th
- March 2nd, 16th & 30th

Please sign-up for your time slot and pick up your intake form. The form needs to be completed prior to your appointment.

Bring your last 2 tax returns.



FREE MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC

Monday, February 13, 2023

10am to 2pm

Beckish Senior Center Community Room

188 CT-66 Columbia, CT

Our CareVan Clinics offers the following services:

- Address various urgent needs (not limited to):
 - o Common cold/flu
 - o Stomach aches
 - o Earaches/infections and foreign body removal
 - o Abscess incision and drainage
 - o Minor burns, minor lacerations, minor sprains and small fractures
 - o Rashes and insect bites
 - o Corneal abrasions

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER (continued):

- Medical Screenings
 - o Blood pressure, Blood sugar, Urinalysis and Urine pregnancy
- Lab tests:
 - o A1C, Cholesterol, Hepatitis C, Hemoglobin, HIV
- Referrals, Follow-up Care
 - o Social Services, Behavioral health, Primary Care/Specialist
- Immunizations: Tetanus (Tdap), Pneumonia, Shingles, Hepatitis B
- COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccine ***12+ for vaccine

We also work to bring in local social service agencies to help with access to heating assistance, Medicare enrollment, etc. WALK-INS WELCOME - **Open to all ages. Insurance accepted but not required.**

Sincerely,

Bernadette Derring
Director Senior Services & Transportation

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SOCIAL SERVICES:

Mobile Foodshare: [Mobile Foodshare](#) provides an opportunity to receive perishable food. Food varies depending on the supply, but can include things like fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. You do not need to show any ID. There is not income eligibility test and you can attend any location. Mobile Foodshare comes to the Columbia Senior Center twice a month as well as other location throughout the state. For a schedule and locations see below. If you have questions about the Columbia location please contact me at 860-228-1008.



For Columbia residents in need of non-perishables and to check availability of toiletries, please contact me to access the Town of Columbia Food Bank.

Energy Assistance: Help with heating costs is available for qualified renters and homeowners who heat with deliverables (oil, propane, wood) or utilities (gas or electric) through the state of CT Energy Assistance program. Annual Gross Income must be under: \$39,761 for a household of 1, \$51,996 For a household of 2, \$64,230 household of 3, \$76,465 household of 4, \$88,699 household of 5, \$100,933 household of 6.

There is no asset test for this program! Proof of the last four weeks of income and utility bills are required. First time applicants must submit proof of social security cards. To apply through Columbia Social Services, contact Katie Wilt at 860- 228-1008 for an appointment. Applicants can also [apply online](#) or through ACCESS (860-450- 7400). [Applications](#) can be downloaded Or, contact Katie Wilt at 860-228-1008 for an application. Applications are currently being accepted. The deadline to apply is May 31,2023.

If you are having issues with your application being processed, please reach out to me for support.

Operation Fuel: [Operation Fuel](#) provides emergency energy and utility assistance to households in CT that are facing financial crisis. Income-eligible applicants can receive a one-time grant if experiencing a crisis situation. Applicants can be submitted [online](#) with directly Operation Fuel, by phone at 860-243-2345, and or making an appointment at [WAIM](#) (860-456-7270, ext 12).

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

(Potential applicants are encouraged to utilize the [state Energy Assistance Program](#) first if possible.)

See income limits in this table.

FAMILY SIZE	100% STATE MEDIAN (GROSS)
1	\$66,270
2	\$86,661
3	\$107,052
4	\$127,443
5	\$147,833
6	\$168,224
7	\$172,048

Katie Wilt | Community Social Services Coordinator

Town of Columbia

323 Route 87

Columbia, CT 06237

kwilt@columbiact.org

860-228-1008

(Office hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm and Friday 8:30 am to 12:30 pm)

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT: While February is the shortest month of the year, it can also be the 'winter weariest' of the year. Hang in there! Spring is right around the corner and we have the activities to help kickstart your system for brighter and warmer days ahead. Join an activity today!

February 4th: Girls in Sports Day ~ Space still available. Sign-up today! A program for girls ages 8 - 13. A morning full of interactive sport clinics of various sports designed to inspire, motivate and teach girls



Girls in Sports Day

Free event hosted by Columbia Parks and Recreation
in collaboration with E.O. Smith Athletics

Saturday, February 4th, 2023
Location: E.O. Smith High School
8:45 a.m.- 12:15 p.m.

Calling all Girls and young women, 8-13 years old

National Girls and Women in Sports Day began in 1987 remembering Olympic volleyball Player Flo Hyman's athletic achievements and work to ensure equality for women's sports. NGWD celebrates past and current sport achievements and supports equality and access for women in sports.

Choose from four activities during each 40-minute session. Try a new sport or participate in a familiar one. Each child will be treated to a day of fun, enriched by their experience.

- Arrive dressed ready to actively participate
- If you would like to bring your own stick, racket, or glove, please do. We will provide equipment for those who do not have it.
- Bring a water bottle to hydrate

Scheduled Events:

8:45am	Registration/ Check-In
9:00am	Welcome & Warm-up
9:20am	Tennis, Soccer, Zumba, Volleyball
10:05am	Track & Field, Yoga, Field Hockey, Basketball
10:50am	Basketball, Lacrosse, Softball, Yoga
11:30am	Team Building Challenges

How to Register: Go to www.Columbiact.org, click on Recreation and follow the prompts for the Girls in Sports Day event. **Start by creating an account for your child on Rec Desk first. For more information, contact:*

Debbie Fiske @: Recdirector@columbiact.org
or call: 860.228.8513

Register by Sunday 1/29
DON'T DELAY..... SPACE LIMITED

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED)

February 14th: **A Stroll through Rec Park ~ 4:30 - 6:30 PM**

Take in the lights, join the Scavenger Hunt Challenge, enjoy a hot cocoa, smile for a picture—whether you like Valentine’s Day or not, this event is for you! Come solo, stroll with a sweetheart. Bring the whole family! Enjoy to the fullest. Exercise and fun all in one! *Rain/Snow date: February 16th*



A Valentine Stroll Through Rec Park
Will you Be our Valentine?

*Whether you love or hate Valentine’s Day,
this is for you!*

February 14th
from 4:30- 6:30 PM
Rain Date: February 16th

*Take in the lights, join the Scavenger Hunt
Challenge, enjoy Hot Cocoa, smile 4 Pictures,
win prizes...*

*Bring the whole family, come solo, or with your
dog. All welcome for some Valentine fun!*

Location: New Pavilion

contact the Columbia Recreation Department
recdirector@columbiact.org
860-228-8513

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

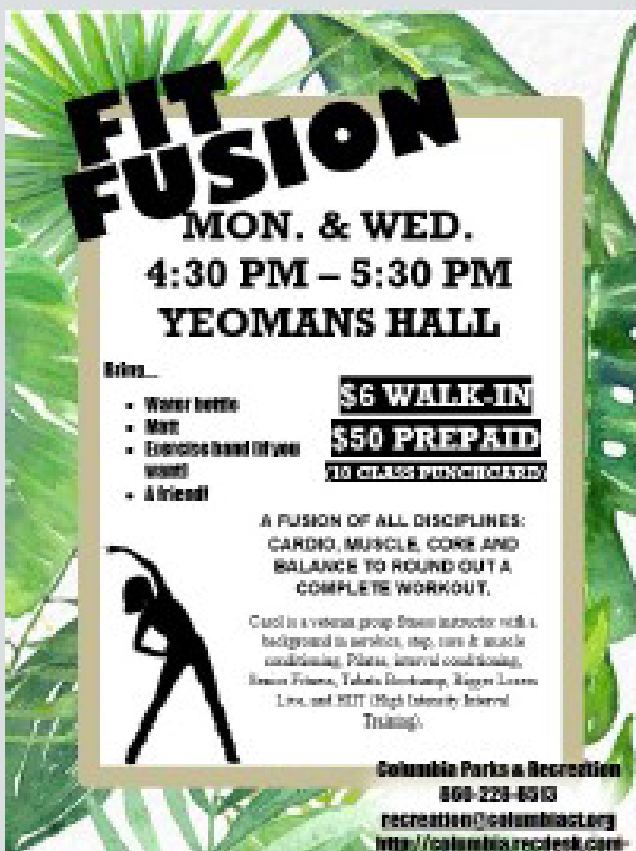
RECREATION DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED):

EXERCISE PROGRAMS:

Fit Fusion ~ *Mondays/Wednesdays, 4:30 - 5:30 @ Yeoman's Hall and NOW FRIDAYS TOO!
Join instructor Carolyn Ritchie for a total body workout for all fitness levels.

ZUMBA ~ Tuesdays, 7 - 8 PM @ Yeoman's Hall. Join instructor Martin Ricardo for an exhilarating, heart pumping dance class. Fun & Fitness all in one!

COMMIT ~ Wednesdays, 7 - 8 PM @ Yeoman's Hall. Join Instructor Karen Ricardo for a fun, high intensity interval training style dance class from music all over the world. All ages, fitness levels and abilities welcome!



FIT FUSION
MON. & WED.
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM
YEOMANS HALL

Bring...

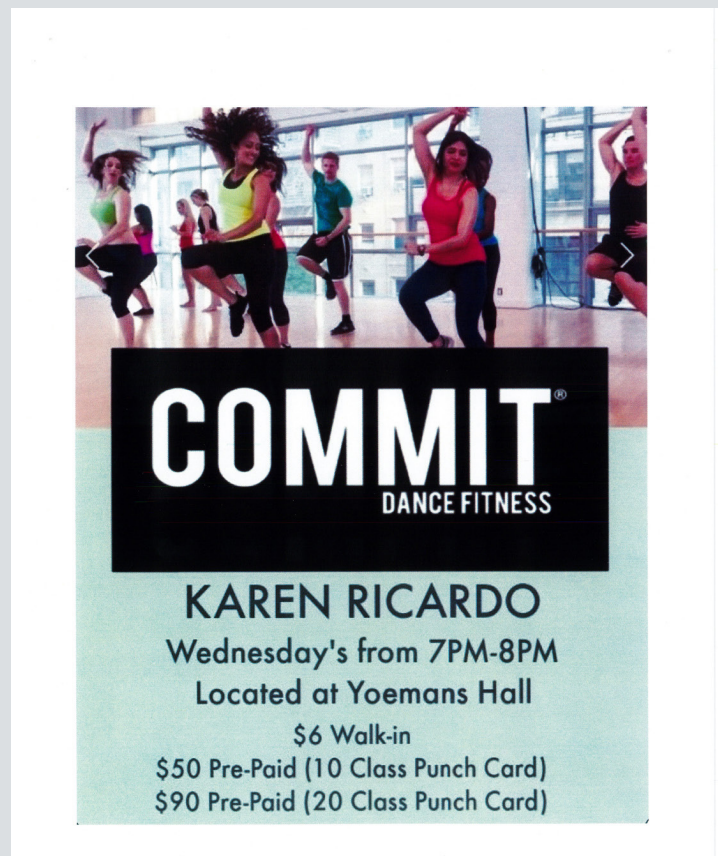
- Water bottle
- Mat
- Exercise band (if you want)
- A friend!

\$6 WALK-IN
\$50 PREPAID
(10 CLASS PUNCHCARD)

A FUSION OF ALL DISCIPLINES: CARDIO, MUSCLE, CORE AND BALANCE TO ROUND OUT A COMPLETE WORKOUT.

Card is a veteran group fitness instructor with a background in aerobics, step, core & muscle conditioning, Pilates, interval conditioning, Group Fitness, Tai Chi, Bootcamp, Rigger Lessons, Low, and HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training).

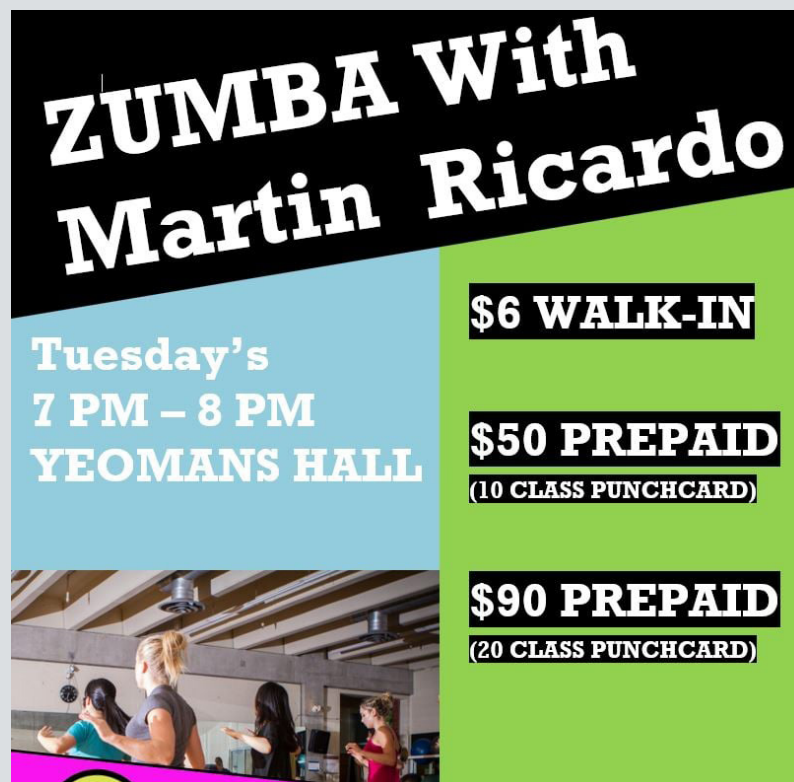
Columbia Parks & Recreation
800-229-6313
recreation@columbiact.org
<http://columbiarecreation.com>



COMMIT
DANCE FITNESS

KAREN RICARDO
Wednesday's from 7PM-8PM
Located at Yeomans Hall

\$6 Walk-in
\$50 Pre-Paid (10 Class Punch Card)
\$90 Pre-Paid (20 Class Punch Card)



ZUMBA With Martin Ricardo

Tuesday's
7 PM - 8 PM
YEOMANS HALL

\$6 WALK-IN
\$50 PREPAID
(10 CLASS PUNCHCARD)
\$90 PREPAID
(20 CLASS PUNCHCARD)

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

Men's Basketball ~ Mondays, 8 - 10 PM (will move to 7-9 PM in March) @ Yeoman's Hall.
Must be 18 years old to participate.

Coming Soon: Registration opens for all programs February 1st. Online or walk-in options.

[Register online.](#)

Co-ed Volleyball ~ Begins February 28th: Tuesdays, 7 - 9 PM @ Horace Porter School

Women's Basketball ~ Begins March 1st: Wednesdays, 7 - 9 PM @ Horace Porter School

Indoor Pickleball ~ Begins March 2nd: Thursdays, 6 - 8 PM @ Horace Porter School



COLUMBIA PARKS & RECREATION

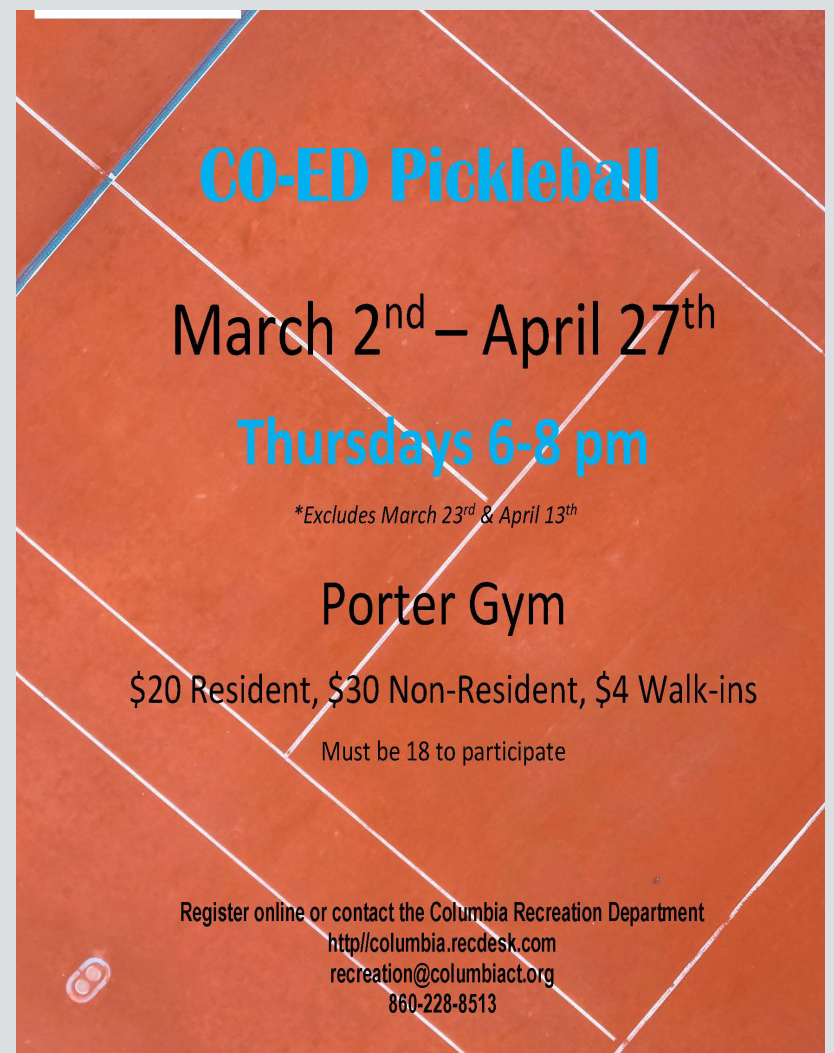
CO-ED VOLLEYBALL

\$20 Residents
\$30 for non-Residents
\$4 walk ins

February 28th – May 25th
Tuesdays 7-9PM
Porter Gym
**Excludes April 11th*

**Must be 18 to participate*

Register online or contact the Columbia Recreation Department
<http://columbia.recdesk.com>
recreation@columbiact.org
860-228-8513



CO-ED Pickleball

March 2nd – April 27th
Thursdays 6-8 pm
**Excludes March 23rd & April 13th*

Porter Gym

\$20 Resident, \$30 Non-Resident, \$4 Walk-ins
Must be 18 to participate

Register online or contact the Columbia Recreation Department
<http://columbia.recdesk.com>
recreation@columbiact.org
860-228-8513



COLUMBIA PARKS & RECREATION

Spring 2023 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL OPEN GYM

Wednesday, 7-9 PM

March 1st – April 26th
**Excludes April 12th*
Porter Gym

\$20 Resident, \$30 Non-Resident, \$4 walk-in
Must be 18 to participate

Register online or contact the Columbia Recreation Department
<http://columbia.recdesk.com>
recreation@columbiact.org
860-228-8513

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED):

SURVEY: We want to hear from you! The Parks and Recreation department is conducting a community survey to help guide our future direction in programming. Please take a moment to give us your thoughts. Click [here](#) to begin Survey. Survey closes February 20th.

Around Town: On a recent Saturday in January, Rec Park was alive with runners for a Cold Snap run to help raise funds for the Hole in the Wall Camp.



Youth Rec Basketball in action:



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED): Columbia Lake:



Recreation Business:

LIFEGUARDS needed for the summer at Columbia Lake. Countdown to summer fun! Start planning for your summer job now. Not certified? We will provide the training and certification. Call the Rec office for more details.

SPONSORS: Looking to partner with Columbia Parks & Recreation? Being a sponsor is a great way to not only promote your business but provide financial support to enhance programming and positively impact the community. Call the department for partnership opportunities: 860.228.8513.

Debra Fiske, Director of Parks & Recreation

323 Route 87, Columbia, CT, 06237

recreation@columbiact.org or 860-228-8513

HOURS: Mon-Wed: 8am-4pm, Thurs: 8am-6pm, Fri: 8am-12pm

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

TOWN CLERKS OFFICE: It is business as usual in the Clerk's office for all those services that you might need – Recording and Searching of Land Records, Marriage licenses, Certified copies of Vital Records, Fishing and Hunting licenses, Dog Licenses, Transfer Station stickers, etc.

For your convenience, there is a large white drop box outside the doors to Yeoman's Hall. This box can be used to drop off items for the Town Clerk and is shared with other offices in Town Hall.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us or reach out to us by email – Robin (townclerk@columbiact.org) or Gail (atownclerk@columbiact.org).

We are happy to help!!

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY: Welcome to February at the Saxton B. We had a slight glitch, so our new mobile friendly website was a bit delayed, but should be live by the time you read this!

Even though February is a short month, we have lots going on. Here are just some of our Feb programs:

- Noon on 2/2 join us for discussion of Aubrey Wood's illustrations at our Adult Picture Book book group. Easy reading, interesting discussions!
- Know that on Monday 2/6 we are expecting Horace Porter students!
- If you have no plans for Valentine's day come join our Adult fiction book group. We'll be discussing the classic, Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier.
- Tue 6:30, we'll have a special presentation on the history of Navy and Tattoos. This will be a zoom presentation, so call for a code and experience the program without going into the cold!
- All ages are welcome to join us the evening of Thurs 2/23 for Book Bingo!

Check our calendar and [website](#) for more.

The Library will be closed on Monday 2/20 for President's Day.

To sign up for a program or get more information, visit our website at: www.columbiactlibrary.org. Call us: (860) 228-0350 or email: SBL@columbiactlibrary.org

Sue Epstein, Library Director

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT: EMT's and Firefighters Needed!



The advertisement features a black background with a central photograph of a fire station at night, showing several fire trucks parked in their bays. Above the photo, the text reads "COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT" in yellow and white, with "EMTs and Firefighters Needed" below it. To the left is a red fire department logo, and to the right is a blue Star of Life. Below the photo, two questions are listed: "- Are you a resident, live nearby, or employed by the town of Columbia Connecticut?" and "- Are you 16 years of age or older?". A red call to action says "The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department needs you!!!". Below that, it states "Certifications and experience not required for application" and "Please inquire about training". On the right side, there is a circular fire department seal and contact information: "www.columbiafire5.org/volunteer", "membership@columbiafire5.org", and "Message us on facebook @Columbiafire5".

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKERS: Community members can help the volunteers who respond to calls by clearly marking your house number in a visible manner on the street. The CVFD makes and sells reflective house number signs that help us quickly and easily identify your house; this often saves precious time. To order the Reflective Address Markers please go to the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's web-page at www.columbiafire5.org and download the printable form or you can fill out the electronic form on-line. The price is \$10.00 per sign or \$12.00 with mounting brackets.

