

Columbia

VIEWS

Volume 3 • Issue 2
Spring 2019



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I wonder if those who sat in the First Selectman's office before me counted the years not by the calendar, but by the budget seasons. I am truly thankful for those who provide the necessary facts and to those who are elected that work together to provide a sound fiscal plan while maintaining the quality of life we enjoy in Columbia.



The start of the spring season is upon us and with that people are out walking, jogging and riding bicycles in the warmer weather. It seems I start every new season conversation with the same hope of safe travels in respect to the traffic on our roads. Too often my office is notified of speeding cars and pedestrian safety concerns. Please remain focused as you travel throughout our Town.

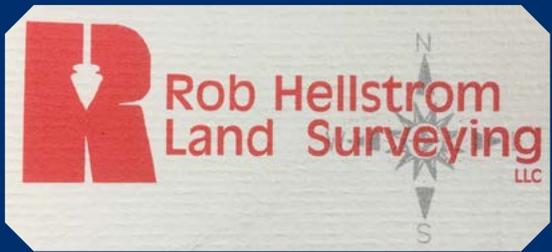
After a very wet winter and early spring the new softball field at REC Park is taking shape. The construction of the new road will begin at the end of summer allowing for a

safer commute through the park. Plans for further expansions are approved and will begin as time allows.

Columbia Lake continues to rise for another enjoyable summer season. It remains one of the cleanest lakes in the state and the treatment of invasive plant life seems to have eradicated the growth of the *Phragmites australis* plant. Whether it's swimming, boating or fishing it is imperative that we care for the lake so that it can continue to be enjoyed by every Columbia citizen for generations to come.

We are continuously working to bring businesses into Columbia, especially along the Route 6 and 66-East road ways. We encourage you to visit our local businesses - stop by, look around and say hello. If you're hungry stop by the new The Main Moose for a bite, or if it's the end of a long week maybe a glass of wine and some music at the Heartstone Farm & Winery on Route 87.

Steven M. Everett
First Selectman



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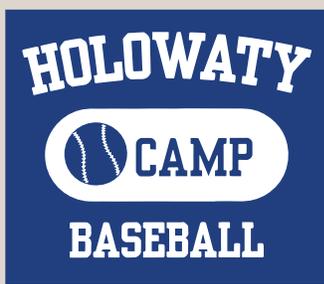
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- 1 First Selectman
- 4 Town Administrator
- 5 Town Clerk's Office
- 6 Columbia Town Directory
- 8 Assessor's Office
- 9 Tax Office
- 9 On the Cover
- 10 Fire Marshal
- 12 Planning & Zoning
- 14 Registrars of Voters
- 16 Conservation & Agricultural Committee
- 17 Columbia Historical Society
- 18 Saxton B. Little Library
- 20 Parks & Recreation Department
- 22 Columbia Congregational Church
- 23 Scouts BSA Columbia Troop 62
- 24 Town Historian
- 25 Beckish Senior Center
- 25 Seniors on the Go
- 26 Sustainable CT
- 28 Community Involvement

ON THE COVER:

LYNETTE BAILEY (LEFT) AND MADISON BERNIER.
PHOTO BY PAUL RAMSEY. STORY ON PAGE 9.

2019 VIEWS Magazines Schedule

3rd Q/19

COLUMBIA: Ad Deadline 7/5/2019
Mailed Week of 8/5/2019

HEBRON: Ad Deadline 8/2/2019
Mailed Week of 8/26/2019

MANSFIELD: Ad Deadline 8/30/2019
Mailed Week of 9/23/2019

4th Q/19

COLUMBIA: Ad Deadline 9/27/2019
Mailed Week of 10/21/2019

HEBRON: Ad Deadline 11/4/2019
Mailed Week of 11/25/2019

MANSFIELD: Ad Deadline 11/22/2019
Mailed Week of 12/9/2019

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Town of Columbia

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FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The quarterly Columbia Views magazine at its core strives to bring timely news from our departments and civic organizations, but we need your help to make the magazine a community-powered magazine that reflects the character of Columbia.

Please submit or encourage others to submit an interesting article or celebratory events (birth announcements, marriage engagements, and life milestones) to the attention of Jennifer LaVoie at town-administrator@columbiact.org.

Some key notes for budding writers:

- Word count is up to 350 words.
- Photos are great but remember to credit the photographer! If no credit is applied the photo will not run.
- Deadlines are firm!!!
- The Editor has the final say on what gets published.

Article submission dates are listed below:

Quarter 3: 7/5/19
Quarter 4: 9/27/19

Teen Jobs

AHM Youth and Family Services has some openings for Columbia teens to work in the TASKs program. TASKs serve's senior citizens living in Columbia, who have projects around their homes for which they need help completing. TASKs is a partnership between AHM and the senior program in Columbia. With springtime now here, there are plenty of outdoor work projects to take care of, but that is not always easy for our local seniors. Local senior citizens have a friend just a phone call away through the AHM TASKs program.

TASKs is available for Columbia seniors that do not have



the means to pay for services on their own or the physical ability to complete all household work any longer.

Teens who are at least 15 years old can apply to work in the TASKs program. Teens that are interested in working in this program should contact Mrs. Kate Graham at the AHM offices, (860-228-9488).

There is no cost to the seniors that use this service, but they must meet the criteria mentioned above. Seniors interested in TASKs should also contact Mrs. Kate Graham at the AHM office, (860-228-9488) or Bernadette Derring, the Columbia Senior Center Services Director at (860-228-0759). Please note that AHM offices are closed on weekends.

Web Site Project Update

We are now setting the stage for a sustainable website redesign project. We will be reviewing and interviewing website designers to determine which firm will best serve the towns needs. We will be meeting with our department heads and identifying goals to improve the interface for making updates, archive ongoing content, but more importantly we need to improve information delivery and end-user navigation. Your input will be critical to define the online experience you expect. We will have to determine what our main goals for the website are now and into the future. I know my kids will tell me to be sure the site is an on-line communication center and works just as well while viewing on a mobile device.

Please keep an eye out for an upcoming survey or just send us an email to townadministrator@columbiact.org with any ideas to help us in this exciting project.

Mark Walter
Town Administrator

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Welcome to spring!

Opening Day for Fishing was April 13, 2019. Sports licenses (fishing and hunting) for 2019 are available for purchase in the Town Clerk's office.

The DEEP has a Family Fishing Day on May 11, 2019 – no license required. There are also Free Fishing License Days on June 16 and August 10, 2019 – You can get a one day license to fish for free on these days!

JUNE is dog licensing month in Connecticut. Dog 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, 2019 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 \$8 for altered dogs and \$19 for unaltered dogs. Licenses will be considered late as of July 1 and a late fee of \$1 per month per dog thereafter will be assessed. For further information, contact the Town Clerk's office.

For information regarding rabies clinics, check the websites for the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association (www.ctvet.org) and The Fox Memorial Clinic at the Connecticut Humane Society (www.cthumane.org).

Robin M. Kenefick
Town Clerk

Gail C. McGrath
Assistant Town Clerk



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COLUMBIA TOWN DIRECTORY

DEPARTMENT		OFFICE HOURS	PHONE
Administrative Office		Mon-Thur 8 am - 4 pm	860-228-0110
First Selectman	Steven Everett	Fri 8 am-Noon	
Town Administrator	Mark B. Walter		
Executive Assistant	Jennifer C. LaVoie		
Assessor's Office		Mon-Wed 8 am -4 pm	860-228-9555
Assessor	Mary Lavallee	Thur 8 am -6 pm	
Assistant Assessor	Keri-Lyn Lewis	Fri 8 am -Noon	
Beckish Senior Center		Mon-Fri 8-3	860-228-0759
Director	Bernadette Derring		
Van Dispatcher/Program Assistant	Margaret Verrizzi		
Social Services	Yolanda Irizarry		860-450-7400 x7418
Building Department		Mon-Wed 8-4	860-228-0440
Building Official	Jason Nowasad	Thur 8-6	
Zoning Enforcement	Connie Kisluk	Fri 8-Noon	
Town Planner	Paula Stahl		
Sanitarian	Glenn Bagdoian		
Inland Wetlands Agent	John Valente		
Administrative Assistant	Cindee Hodge		
Board Secretary	Terri Lasota		
Fire Marshal/Burning Official	Michael Lester		
Assistant to Building Official	Bud Meyers		
Animal Control	Nancy Yale		860-337-1222
Finance Department		Mon-Thur 8 am - 4:30 pm	860-228-8423
Finance Director	Beverly Ciurylo	Fri 8am - Noon	
Accountant/Payroll Specialist	Lisa Rose		860-228-8423
Accounting Assistant	Jill Swenson		860-228-8423
Fire Department			
To report a fire			911
Non-emergency calls			860-228-9602
Fire Chief	Peter Starkel		
Deputy Fire Chief	Michael Lester		
Public Works Department		Mon-Fri 6:30-3	860-228-4270
Director	George Murphy		
Facilities Manager	Bud Meyers		860-228-0110 ext. 111
Recreation Department		Mon-Wed 8-4 Th 8-7	860-228-8513
Recreation Director	Marc Volza	Fri CLOSED	
Recreation Assistant	Alexa Potter		
Registrar of Voters		Varies	860-228-0110
Democrat	Karen Butzgy		
Republican	Kate Morrison		
Resident State Trooper	Gregory DeCarli	Mon-Fri 6:30-3	860-228-9846
Dispatch			860-465-5400
Tax Collector's Office		Mon-Wed 8-2	860-228-0230
Tax Collector	Carol W. Price	Thur 8-6 Fri CLOSED	
Assistant Tax Collector	Lisa McDonald	<i>extended hours in January and July</i>	
Town Clerk's Office		Mon-Wed 8-4	860-228-3284
Town Clerk	Robin M. Kenefick	Thur 8-6 Fri 8-12	
Town Clerk	Gail McGrath		
Transfer Station		Wed 8-4, Sat 8-4	860-228-4270
Transfer Station Attendants	Roger Roberge		
	Tristan Kandolin		



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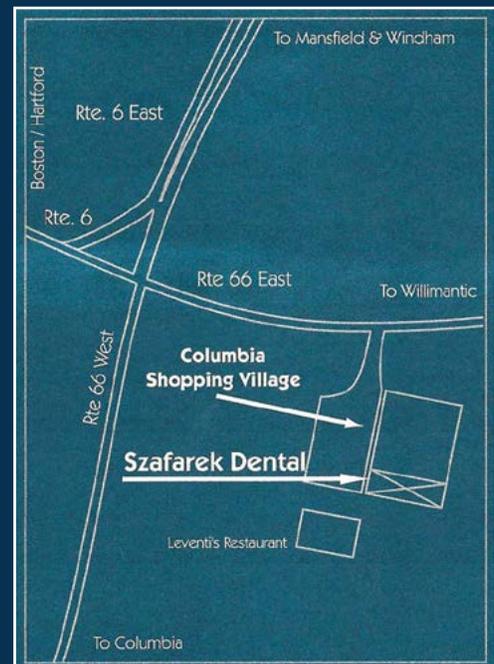
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FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The Renter's Relief program will begin April 1st and will run through October 1, 2019. You will need proof of rents and utilities paid in the 2018 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.

Income and Expense Forms

Connecticut General Statute 12-63c requires all owners of rental real property to annually file an Income and Expense form with the Assessor's Office by June 1st. **The information filed and furnished with this report will remain confidential and is not open to public inspection.**

tion. Any information related to the actual rental and operating expenses shall not be a public record and is not subject to the provisions of Section 1-19 (Freedom of Information) of the Connecticut General Statutes. All properties that are rented or leased, including commercial, retail, industrial, land and residential properties, except "such property used for residential purposes, containing not more than six dwelling units and in which the owner resides" must file and in the case of a non-residential property that is partially rented and partially owner-occupied.

In accordance with Section 12-63c(d), of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, any owner of rental real property who fails to file this form or files an incomplete or false form with intent to defraud, shall be subject to a penalty assessment equal to a **Ten Percent (10%) increase** in the assessed value of such property.

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.



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Real Estate taxes on the October 1, 2017 Grand List that were due July 1, 2018 and January 1, 2019 that have not been paid by May 31, 2019 will have a continuing tax lien filed in the land records as required by law. Any tax not paid by June 30, 2019 will be listed by name and amount in the annual Town Report. You can view and pay your tax bills online, go to www.columbiact.org and click on the view and pay button located on the lower right side of the home page. The Q&A page explains the service fees that are charged to online payments. The service fee to use a Bank account for online payments was recently reduced to .95 cents. The service fee to use credit and debit cards for online payments is 2.95%. By law this office uses the postmark as the payment date.

Important payment information

As of July 1, 2018, the mailing address for all tax payments was changed to: Town of Columbia Dept # 347, PO Box 150512, Hartford, CT 06115-0512. Tax payments are processed by the Town's Bank in July and January. The return envelopes that will be included with your tax bill will have the new PO Box number for your convenience. Other than the collection months of July and January mail can be sent to: Town of Columbia, Tax Collector, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237-1156. Please be aware that PO Box 25 is now closed.

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

Remember the tax office has special office hours during July: Monday through Wednesday 8:00 to 4:00, Thursday 8:00 to 6:00 and Friday 8:00 to 12:00 noon.

ON THE COVER

250th Symposium: Walk in the Footsteps of Eleazar Wheelock and Samson Occom

Cover image: The Mohegan Tribe's tribute to Reverend Samson Occom, expressed here as a sacred dance and drum performance at Horace W. Porter School on April 27, 2019. This followed the presentation of a plaque to First Selectman Steven Everett by Maxine Mauricio, Dartmouth Class of 1993, and member of the Native American Alumni Association of Dartmouth. The bronze plaque honors the memory of Samson Occom as Reverend Eleazar Wheelock's very first Native American student (1743 - 1747). Wheelock's success and Occom's diligence ultimately led to the creation of Moor's Indian Charity School (1755 - 1770) in Lebanon Crank (Columbia); and to the subsequent founding of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire on December 13, 1769.

The 250th Symposium: Walk in the Footsteps of Eleazar Wheelock and Samson Occom was a day-long series of talks exploring what led up to the founding of the college and why Wheelock moved to New Hampshire. It is one of many regional events celebrating the adventurous founding of Dartmouth College. The speakers in Columbia included the Mohegan Tribal Council of Elders: Nonner Faith Damon Davison and Beth Regan, Dartmouth College Professor Colin Calloway, and Connecticut State Historian, UCONN Professor, and Columbia resident

Walt Woodward. Tours and exhibits were provided by members of Columbia Historical Society and Town Historian Ingrid Wood. State Senator Cathy Osten and State Representative Tim Ackert co-presented a Proclamation from the Connecticut General Assembly celebrating Dartmouth College's 250th anniversary, honoring Samson Occom and the Mohegan Tribe, and thanking the town of Columbia for safekeeping of the schoolhouse, where it all began.

Ingrid Wood
Town Historian



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Summertime Safety

Summer is a time for enjoying the warm weather with family and friends. Here are a few fire safety tips to keep in mind as you get ready to experience your favorite seasonal outdoor activities.

1. Make sure your cooking grill is clean and in good working condition before use. Keep your grill at least 5 feet away from combustible materials.
2. Do not store propane tanks in your home, car, or garage.
3. Campfires should never be left unattended. While your campfire is burning, be sure to store water nearby, supervise children and pets around the open flames,

and don't throw garbage into the fire. Aerosol cans and other types of garbage can potentially explode and become dangerous projectiles.

4. Remember that fireworks are illegal in the State of Connecticut. Novelty items such as party poppers, snakes, smoke devices and anything that emits a flame are also not legal for private use. Only sparklers and fountains, which are non-explosive and non-aerial, are legal in Connecticut.
5. The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public display conducted at a state approved site by Connecticut licensed pyrotechnicians.

Mike Lester
Fire Marshal



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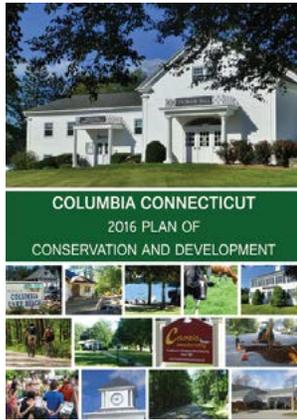
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Implementing Columbia's Plan of Conservation and Development: Business Development

Columbia's Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is continuing to implement the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), the master plan for Columbia's future growth and conservation. The POCD outlines the town's vision for future business and housing development and identifies important natural and community resources that should be considered for conservation.

The POCD is a long-range plan developed with input from residents, property owners, business owners, Boards and Commissions and was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2016.

Economic Development is an important component of the POCD. Columbia's businesses provide jobs, provide services needed by residents and they expand the grand list.



The Commission established the following goal for economic development:

"Columbia's existing businesses are able to grow and prosper and new businesses find opportunities to establish in Town"

To implement that goal, the PZC has been reviewing the current business and commercial zoning regulations, and are now drafting revisions to the regulations that would:

- Streamline the approval process for new businesses,
- Revise dimensional standards to encourage development,
- Revise the existing commercial and manufacturing zone boundaries that would be available for economic development, and
- Respect adjacent residential districts.

The revised regulations will encourage economic development that meets the needs of Columbia residents while preserving the town's character.

In a few months, the PZC will schedule a public hearing to explain the proposed changes to the zoning regulations and zone boundaries before the changes are considered for adoption.

Paula Stahl, LLA, AICP
Columbia Town Planner

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REGISTRARS OF VOTERS



On Friday, January 25th, the Registrar of Voters held a Mock Election for the Horace W. Porter 2nd grade class. The students participated in a simulated voting experience by first checking in with the official checker. The students then voted on a customized ballot featuring a question they created in their class. The Yes/No question was "Trees can only be cut down for a good reason". The results from the mock election were 38 Yes votes and 8 No votes. The students enjoyed seeing the voting process first hand. The Registrar of Voters office is hopeful that we can continue to share the election process with future classes.

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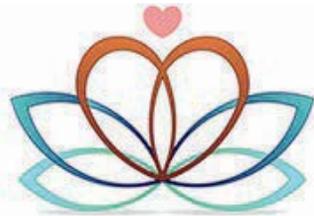
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This month, the town finalized acquisition of a wonderful 57-acre parcel of land in Wells Woods, the most pristine and undeveloped area in town. Mint Brook, a year-round stream, runs through the center of the property and provides excellent wildlife habitat. The property also contains several historic sites including the ruins of an 18th century homestead and an associated mill site. Discontinued town roads provide easy walking. The town will soon be looking for volunteers to work on a Management Plan for the parcel with the aim of allowing for the greatest recreational use while protecting the natural and historic features.



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Saturday May 18, 2019

9 am to 3 pm

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Future of the Garden

In 2009, the garden began with one 50' x 50' fenced section.

Currently there is now approximately 10,000 square feet of garden space as part of the property's open space management plan. Garden projects can expand further with continued citizen interest and community support. Pest management strategies are utilized in keeping with our organic gardening practices. We are committed to welcoming and assisting new gardeners as part of the community gardening spirit.

For More Information

The Columbia Recreation department encourages you to learn more about the Columbia Community Garden. Please read our garden information packets available at Town Hall, rec office, or online at the town's website: www.columbiact.org under the Columbia Rec Department web link.

columbiactgarden@gmail.com

Seeds of the Future

Building community spirit through community gardening can happen when citizens choose to:

- Grow crops in individual plots side by side with neighbors
- Work in a cooperative garden plot sharing the work and harvest equally
- Grow crops to produce food for those in need
- Teach a family member or friend how to garden
- Provide assistance to those with disabilities so they may enjoy a gardening experience



- Volunteer at garden related events
- Participate in community garden composting and improvement projects.
- Join informal gatherings/socials (potlucks, Saturday morning garden coffee klatches, cooking demonstrations, etc.)
- Mentor beginning gardeners
- Become a master gardener
- Create garden art projects/crafts
- Participate in related garden and agricultural opportunities (canning, sustainable backyard gardening techniques, farming, etc.)
- Assist in the development of a cooperative berry patch where gardeners pool their resources and share in the harvest together.

Community Garden at Szegda Farm
Szegda Road, Columbia

In cooperation with the Columbia Recreation Department and Szegda Farm Management Committee

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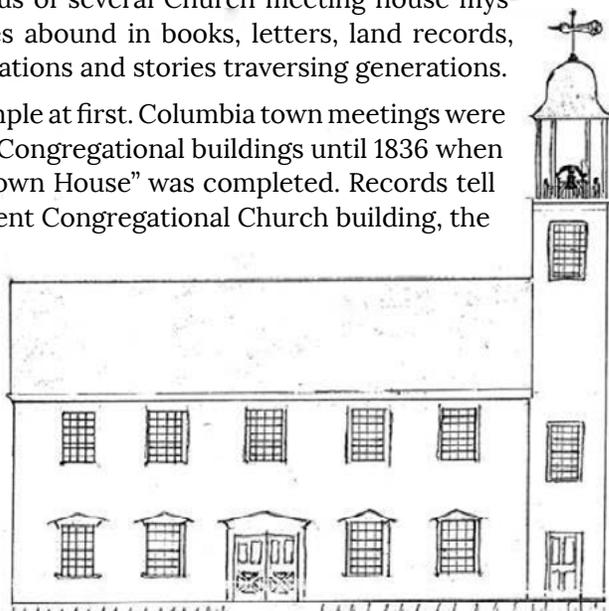
Something seems to be missing; perhaps more than one something has been mislaid, lost or forgotten here in Town. Perhaps it's all in plain sight, unrecognized, 300+ years later. Investigation and discovery are the work of History and Archaeology. That work is a fascinating pursuit of mysteries, and we have some.

In 1715, Columbia was part of Lebanon, known as the Lebanon North Parish congregation, aka Lebanon Second Society, aka Lebanon Crank. We were the Congregational Church because back then that Church was the Town government and men had to be Church members in order to vote or hold office. We became the Second Society because we were too far from the First Society meeting house at Lebanon Green for our residents to attend worship there regularly as required.

In the northeast colonies back then Church and State were virtually synonymous because this area was settled primarily by colonists seeking freedom to worship and live according to their religious beliefs. Separation of Church and State was established by law in 1818, 14 years after the incorporation of the Town of Columbia in 1804.

Prior to 1804 where were the Lebanon Crank roads and buildings? Roads often followed established trails of Native Americans who inhabited the area for thousands of years before the colonists came. Where did Crank Church members worship and hold meetings? Those questions are the focus of several Church meeting house mysteries. Clues abound in books, letters, land records, early foundations and stories traversing generations.

It seems simple at first. Columbia town meetings were held in the Congregational buildings until 1836 when the first "Town House" was completed. Records tell us the current Congregational Church building, the 3rd meeting house, was built in 1832. The 2nd meeting house was completed in 1751 "about 10 rods (165 feet)



Lebanon Crank Congregational blue meeting house, 1748-1832 (steeple built 1792). By John Yeomans. Courtesy Columbia Congregational Church

Calendar

May

Sunday, May 5th

Take Note Concert -
Sanctuary
3:00PM

Saturday, May 11th

Community Breakfast -
Parish Hall
8:00AM - 11:00AM

Sunday, May 12th

Blanket Sunday
Collection

Sunday, May 19th

Church School Teacher
Appreciation Day

June

Sunday, June 2nd

10:00AM- Rev. Dr.
George Peters speaking
as part of our 300th
Anniversary

Saturday, June 8th

Community Breakfast -
Parish Hall
8:00AM - 11:00AM

Sunday, June 9th

Children's Sunday
followed by a picnic

June

Saturday, July 13th

Community Breakfast -
Parish Hall
8:00AM - 11:00 AM

south" of the 1st meeting house and painted "sky colour". We have an eyewitness drawing of that blue church made by Church secretary John Yeomans (b.1802), who was 30 years old when the move from the 2nd to the 3rd (current) building took place in 1832.

*Just what tint of blue was that 2nd meeting house? According to a Clarke family story some leftover blue paint was used in the Brewster / Clarke house (c.1742-47) at #291 Rte.87.

*What did the 1st meeting house look like and exactly where was it located? Research by Columbia and Church historian Gladys Rice Soracchi placed the 1st building in front of the current Yeomans Hall, and the 2nd (blue) meeting house across the current Rte.87 in front of #320 Rte.87.

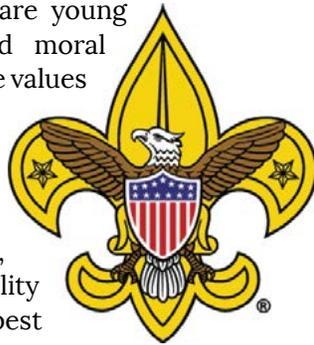
*Where were Lebanon Crank worship services and village meetings held prior to 1733 when the 1st meeting house was ready to be "seated"?

These are some of the intriguing mysteries being pursued by Congregational Church members, members of the Columbia Historical Society, the Town Historian and Columbia residents. Stay tuned and remember: "Nothing changes faster than the Past"!

Andrea Stannard
Columbia Congregational Church,
Columbia Historical Society

Who we are, what we do

The BSA's mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts BSA is a year-round program for all youth 11-17 years old that provides fun, adventure, leadership, challenge and responsibility helping them become the best version of themselves.



Doing service projects together is one way that our Scouts keep their promise "to help other people". While each Scout should do their best to help people every day, group projects allow them to give back to our community. In giving service, Scouts learn to work cooperatively and to impact others positively. Prominent examples include our Scouts performing flag services at town sponsored ceremonies, collecting food for the pantry at the winter Gazebo Lighting, and helping our chartered organization, the Columbia Lions, with their Chicken BBQ and Pancake Breakfasts. Last fall our Troop assisted the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District with installing rain gardens at the town beach.

You might have seen some Eagle projects that have been planned and executed by individual scouts that have worked their way up to the highest rank within the Scout BSA program. Since 2016, there are new beach picnic tables and a bench, an overhauled trail map and trail markers at Rec Park, a flag retirement box at the Beckish Senior Center, another walkway replaced at the Congregational Church, two handicap accessible community garden boxes, a gaga-ball pit at Asto-Wamah,

Scrap Metal Drive to benefit Columbia Troop 162

Saturday May 18th 8am to Noon

Rolgate Realty parking lot - 65 Rte 6 Columbia

Bring your unwanted scrap metal: copper, bronze, steel, iron, aluminum, bicycles, washers, dryers, dishwashers, pots and pans, lawn furniture, gas grills, swing sets, car parts, farm equipment, motors, complete mowers, even your metal kitchen sink!

We cannot take: automotive tires, propane tanks, air conditioners, fridges or freezers, plastics, timber or any liquid materials.

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custom bookshelves for the Chapel on the Green and an invasive species presentation/lake cleanup event.

We're grateful to our town and the surrounding community. Your generosity and support help our program continue to flourish while our scouts have fundraised for the aforementioned Eagle projects. Additionally, your donations of redeemable aluminum cans and glass/plastic bottles at the transfer station continuously fund our troop.

Look for our Scouts around town: some may be in full uniform at town events, and some may be volunteering time on a community project. Troop 162 is proud to call Columbia home.



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Columbia's Constitution Oak (ca. 1901-1997)

An early 20th century photograph of Center School (formerly Moor's Indian Charity School building from 1755 - 1769) on Columbia Green shows a small young tree, possibly a pin oak sapling. Young man Hubert Collins and his father William Collins, Columbia's delegate to Connecticut's 1902 Constitutional Convention, planted the sapling, a gift from Senator Joseph Hawley of Hartford.



This pin oak sapling was likely planted near school's fourth location, just east and in back of the newly erected Yeomans Hall, a gift of Mary Yeomans in 1900. But in November 1940 a fire destroyed Yeomans Hall. As plans for a new Yeomans Hall were being devised, according to Eleanor Tuttle, Hubert Collins suggested the placement of the new Yeomans Hall "be so located that the Constitution Oak be to the east of the entrance". The driveway through "Columbia Campus" as Dr. George S. Brookes called it was to be underneath the Constitution Oak's grand canopy. The positioning of the 1941 Yeomans Hall was sited in such a way so as to preserve this tree. In 1965 this handsome specimen was deemed "in the best condition of any in the state", according to Mr. Hubert Collins, who continually



kept a watchful eye on it.

Eleanor Tuttle's 1965 article "A Constitution Oak Flourishes in Columbia" proudly showcased the



town of Columbia and its historic pin oak. This tree also appeared on the cover of Columbia's 1971 Annual Report. But sadly, by August 1996 the huge tree was dying. Professional arborists were consulted, and hearings were called by Selectman Adella Urban to discuss the best course of action. By May 1997 there was little recourse and the once magnificent "Columbia Constitution Oak" was cut down. This grand pin oak lived nearly 96 years near two successive town halls. It was a living memorial to the 1902 Connecticut State constitutional referendum, one of 168 such pin oak saplings gifted to each delegate who attended. In 2002 Connecticut's Notable Trees Commission reported that only 74 of the original 168 Constitution Pin Oaks planted in 1902 had survived 100 years. The largest Constitution Pin Oak today grows in Avon. It reached an impressive 14 and a half feet in circumference with a canopy spread of approximately 88 feet by 2002.

Columbia's former Constitution Pin Oak is memorialized in the town seal. A small table, gifted by Columbia wood turner Kenneth E. Ekwurtzel with its associated plaque is the final tribute to it. What of the 1902 Connecticut Constitutional Convention? Well, it failed by a 2-1 margin, but the matter of Connecticut's redistricting and representation was finally resolved in the state's 1965 constitution.

Ingrid Wood
Town Historian

Who we are, what we do

Senior centers are the access point to our state’s aging network, where we connect older adults to essential community services that can help them stay healthy and independent. The Beckish Senior Center brings a multitude of services to our area seniors. We offer a wide variety of programs and services, including:

- Meal and nutrition programs – We serve meals Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 12 noon. Sign-up is required 48 hours in advance.
- Food pantry and social services – Yolanda Irizarry is our Social Services Caseworker from the Access Agency. There mission is to create opportunities that empower under-resourced individuals, families and communities to achieve and sustain economic stability. Energy Assistance, budgeting and so much more.
- Health, fitness, and wellness programs – We offer a wide variety of exercise programs from Silver Sneakers, Zumba, Yoga and Pilates, and Chair Yoga. We also offer an exercise room equipped with a treadmill, elliptical and weights.
- Transportation services – We offer transportation to medical, shopping, errands and more. Every day from 8:30 to 2:30pm with flexibility in our schedule.

- Medicare/Medicaid counseling
- Employment assistance – Beckish is a host agency with Maturity Works – giving seniors the ability to work and gain work experience.
- Volunteer and civic engagement opportunities
- Social and recreational activities – We offer many special events from dinner dances to BBQ’s and various entertainers – music, comedy, educational and magicians
- Educational, computer classes and arts programs
- Intergenerational programs
- Podiatrist, haircuts, flu shots, blood pressure clinics
- Travel – Our day and overnight trips are with Friendship Tours, a very popular travel organization. Every month we travel to a new destination. Everyone is welcome 18 years of age and older.

One of the best ways for seniors to remain healthy and happy on a long-term basis is to engage with others on a regular basis. The Beckish Senior Center provides an opportunity for seniors to be active, enjoy various social activities, and to improve their overall quality of life. We are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm. For additional information please pick up a Gem Newsletter or go online to www.columbiact.org. 860-228-0759.

SENIORS ON THE GO

Spring means wonderful and warm things are happening. For the seniors of the CSO it means TAG SALE and SPRING DINNER DANCE.

On May 18th we will be having our annual tag sale from 9am through 2pm. There will be general items, special knickknacks, jewelry, games and toys, as well as a bake sale and lunch. You can help in three ways. First – come and shop!! Second – volunteer some time on Friday, the before and on Saturday, sale day. Third – donate usable items for sale by bringing them to the Beckish Senior Center.

Our spring dinner dance will be on June 1, from 5 – 10pm. Our theme will be Hoedown so come in your jeans and be comfortable. We will have the meal catered by Audibert’s and will feature Bruce John and his band. It is always a

wonderful night of feasting, dancing and socializing. The tickets are on sale for \$18.00.

We hope to see you at these events and have a great spring.

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Columbia Enrolls in Sustainable CT. Local Actions. Statewide Impact.

Columbia is now one of 82 municipalities across the state participating in Sustainable CT a self-enrolled, voluntary certification program that recognizes vibrant communities, thriving economies and healthy, resilient Connecticut municipalities. Sustainable CT provides a wide-ranging menu of best practices. Communities choose Sustainable CT actions, implement them, and earn points towards certification such as Bronze (200+ points) or Silver (400+ points) and lasts for three (3) years.



Why Participate in Sustainable CT?

- **Recognition.** Put Columbia on the map for its existing sustainability successes.
- **Economic Benefit.** Demonstrate Columbia's commitment to sustainability. Businesses and potential residents may be more likely to locate in our community, growing the local tax base.
- **Community Building.** Engage community stakeholders, increasing ownership, legitimacy and support for sustainability action.
- **The Future.** Current and future residents Columbia depend on forward-looking, local action now to ensure vibrant economies and healthy, resilient communities in the future.

What is Sustainable CT?

Sustainable CT is independently funded through philanthropic donations. The program is designed to support all Connecticut municipalities regardless of size, geography or resources. The mission is to; support the self-selected actions chosen by the community, provide tools to assist in the implementation of these actions, promote opportunities to help the economic well-being, such as grant funding, enhance equity, all while respecting the finite capacity of the natural environment.

Who is Sustainable CT?

Since its inception in 2017 Sustainable CT has grown in popularity among municipalities. Created by towns, for towns, spearheaded in late 2016 by founding partners Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University, who is also the program administrator.

Why does it matter for Columbia?

In the fall of 2018 Columbia's Board of Selectman passed a Resolution of Support to participate in the Sustainable CT program. First Selectman Steven Everett was quoted at the December 18, 2018 Columbia Board of Selectman Meeting stating, "[...] this program provides the opportunity for boards and commissions to come together for one goal – defining where the town wants to move going forward and eliminates the silos the often happen within towns". The Sustainable CT program can enhance many of the existing efforts undertaken by Columbia over the years and support new efforts. First Selectman Everett also stated that the program provides a "common-sense approach".

How does the Sustainable CT program work?

There are nine (9) Action Categories and several action items within each Action Category and worth a variety of points. Columbia must complete one (1) action item from each of the nine (9) Action Categories and achieve 200+ points (Bronze Certification) or 400+ points (Silver Certification) for certification that lasts for three (3) years. Previous activities Columbia may have already accomplished prior to enrollment in Sustainable CT does apply towards certification.

The nine (9) Action Categories are:

- Thriving Local Economies
- Well-Stewarded Land & Natural Resources
- Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems
- Dynamic and Resilient Planning
- Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices
- Efficient Physical Infrastructure and Operations
- Strategic and Inclusive Public Services
- Healthy Housing Options
- Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
- Innovation Action

If you are interested in learning more about the nine (9) Action Categories and associated action items stop by Town Hall to pick up a Sustainable CT Brochure,

check the Town Website, or visit Sustainable CT at www.sustainablect.org for more information about the program.

What can I do to stay involved?

If you are interested in potentially chairing an Action Sub-Committee either visit, email, or call the Town Administrator at 323 Route 87, townadministrator@columbiact.org or 860-228-0110. Coming soon look for more information on ways to participate.

About the Author:

Andrea Drabicki was appointed Chair of Sustainable Columbia by the Board of Selectman in the fall of 2018. Andrea is a certified public facilitator, Notary Public and sustainability professional with over 15 years of project management experience. She currently serves Columbia as an Alternate on Zoning Board of Appeals and as Secretary of the Environmental Advisory Committee.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

COLUMBIA OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE



Open Space Logo Contest: The Columbia Open Space Committee is having a contest to design a new logo for Open Space. The logo will be used on information and outreach brochures, signs to mark open space locations in town, T-Shirts, and other uses.

For more information please go to www.columbiact.org.

All entries are due by June 1, 2019 and should be submitted to Jennifer C. LaVoie, Town Hall, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. Questions can be directed to Chris Tolsdorf at 860- 228-4081. A prize of \$100.00 will be awarded to the designer of the winning logo.

Get involved in your town

I have lived in Columbia my whole life and this is where I have raised my family. I am always impressed with the feeling of community that I experience. I am now a grandmother and am enjoying watching my grandson make friends in Pre-K while meeting the parents and grandparents of his new buddies. I have also been very active with the Democrat party in Columbia since the early 90's and have found that to be very rewarding as well.

My purpose of writing this article is to encourage town residents to get more involved in the different commissions in Columbia. In the 90's, we used to get about 100 people attending a Democratic caucus where we would be electing members to the Democratic Town Committee. Now we are lucky if we can get enough people to make a committee. I believe that the Republicans in Columbia also have the same issues.

The legislative powers of the town are vested in a town meeting. I know that the town residents are busy working and raising families while maintaining their homes. I am asking that people stay more informed about what is happening in Columbia, join a commission that is of interest to them and attend all Town Meetings. We need more young people to get involved.

There are 2 political town committees in Columbia. If you belong to a party, you are welcome to gather information about each one by contacting the prospective town chairs. The Democratic chair is Tom Currier and his number is 860 208-0324. The Republican chair is Kelley Peck and her number is 869 490-4622. In order to join a commission where members are elected, you will have to contact the chair to discuss your options. If you are not a member of a party, you can still join a commission and should contact one of these party chairs to express your

desires. In order to join a commission where members are appointed, you are invited to contact Mark Walter, Town Administrator, at 860 228-0110.

In closing, I would also like to say that the country is going through some turbulent times. I find that the residents of Columbia are respectful of each other. We all have a right to our own beliefs, and we have an on-going discussion at the CDTC about the difference between Democrats and Republicans in Columbia. I believe that it is healthy to have 2 parties where people have varied opinions, discussions occur, and compromise is made. It would be nice if our country did not let money and power interfere with this process.

Please consider contacting a town committee chair to discuss joining a commission or joining the political committee of your choice.

Judith S Oritz

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