

# Columbia VIEWS

Volume 4 • Issue 3  
Summer/Fall 2020



*Your Hometown Connection • Columbia, CT*



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On May 20, 2020, the Annual Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2020/2021 was approved with no mill rate increase. We recognized that many residents have had to make sacrifices as a result of the pandemic, and we approached this budget season with that in mind. We focused our efforts on providing a balanced and responsible budget while maintaining the quality of life for the citizens of Columbia. The budget documents can be viewed on the Town's website at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org).



The Board of Selectmen adopted certain ordinances expanding property tax exemptions and abatements for veterans. These include:

- Ordinance for Additional Exemption for Veterans.
- Ordinance for Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses.
- Ordinance for Tax Exemption on Motor Vehicles Equipped for Disabled Veterans.
- Ordinance for Increased Exemption for 100% Disabled Veterans.

To find out more information please go to the Town's website under the "Charter, Ordinances, Resolutions, and Annual Report tab, Chapter 18.

The Lion's Club sponsored 4th of July Parade was regrettably cancelled this year; however, a wonderful group of organizers from The Columbia Congregational Church Honkin' Hello's offered a change to our normal 4th of July Parade by providing a 4th of July Car Parade. Several organizations and local businesses were represented in the parade, including the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Columbia Lions Club, Columbia Girl Scout Troop, The Beckish Senior Center, Columbia Scouts, Columbia Ford and The Main Moose to name a few. Thank you to the organizer's, especially Nancy Douton and the participants. Columbia's pride certainly shined through on the 4th of July.

We would like to thank all of our residents for keeping our fledgling bald eagles in mind this 4th of July by refraining from setting off fireworks. As many of you know, we have an adult pair of American Bald Eagles (Bertha & Harry) nesting near Columbia Lake and they successfully hatched two eaglets, that we are affectionately calling Chuck and Berry.

In other good news, the purchase of two parcels has been completed in the Wells Woods area that adds four-hun-



Chuck and Berry, Columbia's eaglets.

dred acres to the Mono Pond State Park. The purchase of this important natural resource for the Town of Columbia was put together through funding with The Trust for Public Land and the State of Connecticut, the Towns of Columbia and Lebanon, personal donations and a generous donation from the Columbia Historical Society.

The Town Hall will be open to the public by Appointment Only. We encourage the public to visit the Town website at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org) for up to date information and I will also be providing weekly live updates on the Town of Columbia YouTube channel and on our Facebook page.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett  
First Selectman

[severett@columbiact.org](mailto:severett@columbiact.org)  
860-228-0110



Roa Alammari, MD, FACOG  
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ON THE COVER:  
 Columbia Town Beach  
 Photo by Paul Ramsey

## 2020 VIEWS Magazines Schedule

### 4th Q/20

**COLUMBIA:** Ad Deadline 10/9/2020  
 Mailed Week of 11/2/2020

**HEBRON:** Ad Deadline 11/6/2020  
 Mailed Week of 12/7/2020

### 1st Q/21

**COLUMBIA:** Ad Deadline 1/8/2021  
 Mailed Week of 2/8/2021

**HEBRON:** Ad Deadline 2/12/2021  
 Mailed Week of 3/8/2021

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## Columbia Views

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The Town of Columbia is beginning to roll out eased restrictions under the new phase of reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to encourage residents to use on-line services. In-person appointments will be



available on a department-by-department basis. For a staff directory to schedule an appointment please visit the Town of Columbia's website at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). You can find the hours of operations and contact information under the "Contact Us & Hours of Operation" tab.

Entrance to the building will be limited to Yeoman's Hall and exiting through Town Hall. Please respect our safety guidelines by wearing a mask when entering the building, use hand sanitizer at the entrance, and observe social distancing guidelines.

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.

The Senior Center will remain closed, but the Transportation Program has started back up with limited seating, from 8am to 3pm. More information is provided in the Columbia Views under the Beckish Senior Center page.

As of July 7th, the Saxton B. Little Library will continue to offer curbside service. Hours are changing to accommodate patron browsing times. Details can be found on the Saxton B. Little website at [www.columbialibrary.org](http://www.columbialibrary.org). More information is provided in the Columbia Views under the Saxton B. Little Library page.

With Phase 2 of reopening, the Parks & Recreation department has opened the playgrounds and residents can now rent the Recreation Park Pavilion. The pavilion has a max capacity of 100 people. The indoor bathrooms at the park are not open, due to this we have cut the rental fee and deposit in half.

Beach passes can be purchased on-line on the Recreation Departments page on the Town's website and Beach passes are checked at the gate. The Beach capacity remains at 55 people until further notice. For updates on the number of people at the beach call (860) 428-1482. Kayak rentals have resumed at Columbia Lake (equipment will be sanitized after each use).

The Town of Columbia is accepting online 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 online through the Recreation Department Rec Desk page or donations can be mailed to The Town of Columbia, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237.

For up to date information and details on COVID-19, Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD) has real-time information on their website [www.ehhd.org](http://www.ehhd.org) with an embedded link to COVID-19 information from the CDC. If you have specific questions, please contact EHHD directly at (860) 429-3325. Connecticut residents are urged to continue taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For the latest information and guidance please go to the <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>.

Our boards and commissions continue to meet virtually. We encourage you to join via Zoom and to provide your comments and input. We want to hear from you! This can be done several ways; through the dedicated email for public input at [PublicInput@columbiact.org](mailto:PublicInput@columbiact.org) and during the meetings utilizing the "Chat" feature in Zoom or providing comment during the Audience of Citizens/Public Comment portion of the meeting.

We will from time to time issue an Everbridge Notification with a message from the First Selectman, Steven M. Everett to help keep you informed. If you would like to sign up for Everbridge Notifications, please go to the Town's website and click on the "Everbridge Notifications" tab.

To receive Town news please go to the Town's website and click on the "Email Notifications" tab.

With Phase 2 reopening the health of our residents, staff, and families are our top priority. Please follow the State guidelines for your safety and those in your community. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call the Town Administrative Office or the First Selectman at 860-228-0110 or email us at [townadministrator@columbiact.org](mailto:townadministrator@columbiact.org).

Thank you,

Mark B. Walter  
Town Administrator

860-228-0110  
[townadministrator@columbiact.org](mailto:townadministrator@columbiact.org)

The Transfer Station has resumed full service with the following exceptions:

- Swap Shop is Closed.
- Hard & soft cover books will not be accepted.
- Textiles (clothing) will not be accepted. Please dispose of textiles in the regular garbage.

When providing payment please use exact change. There is a box mounted on the outside of the Transfer Station custodian's office for your payments. The Scouts BSA Redemption Shed will be open. We ask residents to please be respectful as always of this shed and to please only deposit CT redeemable bottles and cans.

Applications can be picked up at the Transfer Station or online at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org).



*Solar walkway lights.*

[columbiact.org](http://columbiact.org). Please mail in your application to 323 Route 87, Columbia CT., attention Town Clerk, drop off at the lock box located outside Yeoman's Hall. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. You can also call the Town Clerk's office for an appointment at 860-228-3284.

You can also purchase your Transfer Station stickers on-line on the Recreation page on the website ([www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org)). If you have not previously set up an account in our Reckdesk system you will need to do so. Once your account is set up click on the Programs icon and scroll down to Transfer Station Pass and click to go to the on-line application process.

The standard permit price (2 stickers) is \$40 per household for non-seniors and \$20 per household

for seniors (62 and over). Up to 2 additional stickers may be purchased at \$20 each.

REMINDER: When using the Transfer Station, please remember to wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Some of the projects that the DPW have been working on include:

- New solar walkway lights installed at the Town Hall Annex.
- New solar powered scoreboard installed at Columbia Recreation Areas new Softball Field.
- New construction of Basketball and Pickleball courts is scheduled to begin in July, weather permitting.
- Completed construction of a new entrance road at Columbia Recreation Area, wooden guardrail soon to be installed.
- Resurfaced the walking paths at Columbia Recreation Area
- New landscaping installed at the Beckish Senior Center with the help of volunteers.
- Milling of Lake Road and West Street Extension has begun and anticipated completion will be the week of July 6.

Ongoing projects: Tree work will continue throughout the Town. Eversource will be using Asplundh for tree work clearing along power lines.



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## Assessor's Notice to Taxpayers

All persons liable to pay taxes are hereby notified to declare all tangible personal property owned by them as of October 1st. CGS 12-41(d) provides that the assessor must apply a 25% **PENALTY** for failure to file by November 1st.

The Assessor's Office will mail declaration forms to all property owners previously on record. Failure to receive a form does not negate the requirements to declare. Forms are available online and in the Assessor's Office.

**NOTE:** A declaration for real property or registered motor vehicles are not necessary. Taxable personal property includes: unregistered motor vehicles, motor vehicles located in Connecticut but registered in another state, office, manufacturing and farming equipment, machinery, tools, leasehold improvements, and unregistered trailers. Please call the Assessor's Office for a full list or if you need clarification.

**VETERANS:** who served for more than ninety days during a time of war or have been disabled must have recorded their honorable discharge with the Town Clerk by October 1st in order to receive an exemption against their 2021 tax bill.

**ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS:** must submit an application to the Assessor's Office in order to receive 2020 Motor Vehicle benefits no later than December 2021. A copy of your orders is necessary.

**ADDITIONAL VETERAN'S EXEMPTION:** Increased exemptions are available for those who meet the necessary income requirements and file with the Assessor's Office by October 1st. Biennial filing is required and proof of income must be furnished at the time of application.

**HOMEOWNERS:** Connecticut law provides for Annual Tax Relief for persons who are 65 years or older or totally disabled who meet necessary qualifications. To be eligible for a benefit for the 2020 tax bill, an application with proof of income and, if applicable, proof of total disability must be filed during the following dates:

**HOMEOWNERS:** Feb. 1 through May 15

**RENTERS:** April 1 through Oct. 1

**PERSONS PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED,** regardless of age, may also apply for the benefits under the elderly program.

**AMBULANCE-TYPE VEHICLE,** used exclusively for the purpose of transporting any medically incapacitated individual, except for payment, may be eligible for exemption.

**TOTALLY AND PERMANENTLY DISABLED PERSONS:** Any

person under the age of 65 that has been awarded total disability must apply by October 1st in order to receive a \$1000 assessment exemption. Applicants must furnish proof of award.

**FARM MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT:** farmers must file a notarized M-28 exemption form on or before November 1st annually to receive an exemption for farm machinery.

**LAND CLASSIFICATION:** Persons seeking to apply under farm, for the first time, must file an application between September 1st and October 31st with the Assessor's Office. Persons who have previously applied need not re-apply. Persons seeking to apply for forest must have the land certified by a forester submitted by Oct. 1st

**MANUFACTURING MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT:** equipment used in the manufacturing process may be allowed an exemption if certain guidelines are met. A completed application must be filed by November 1st.

**NEW COMMERCIAL TRUCKS** with a gross rating in excess of 26,000 lbs. should check with the Assessor's Office for tax exemption eligibility. Applications must be completed and filed with the Assessor by November 1st.

### LOCAL OPTIONS:

**FIREFIGHTERS:** Columbia volunteer firefighters who meet certain requirements are eligible for tax abatement up to \$1000.

**ELDERLY HOMEOWNERS PROGRAM:** Senior Citizens or disabled individuals can defer the amount of their taxes that exceed 8% of their income. The application deadline is May 1ST annually.

**GOLD STAR PARENTS AND SPOUSES:** Exemption for parent or spouse whose son or spouse was killed in action. Must be file with required proofs no later than October 1st. Cannot exceed maximum income levels of \$41,000 if married and \$39,000 if single.

**MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPPED FOR DISABLED VETERAN:** Must submit proof of adaptation and application no later than October 1st. Exemption exempts one vehicle specially equipped for disabled veteran.

**INCREASE OF DISABLED VETERANS EXEMPTION FOR 100% DISABLED:** Increases exemption for fully disabled veterans to three times the prior required exemption. Cannot exceed maximum income levels of \$24,000 for married and \$21,000 for single applicant.

Most applications can be found on our town website.

**FOR QUESTIONS ON ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS PLEASE CALL 228-9555.**



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Dr. Kimberly Mordasky  
 Dr. Jaime DeLeon

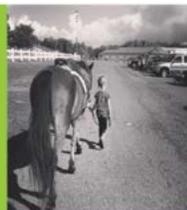
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In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive orders Columbia has adopted the Deferment Program. This defers the last day to pay taxes until October 1, 2020. The exception to this program is: Real estate bills for landlords and Real Estate escrowed accounts, they are due on or before Monday August 3, 2020. The postmark of August 4, 2020 is a late payment and interest will be charged from the due date of July 1, 2020 at 3. % (1.5% for July and 1.5% for August).

All motor vehicle taxes, the 1st installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes are due on or before October 1, 2020. This office uses the postmark as the date of payment. The postmark of October 2, 2020 is a late payment and interest will be charged at 6% (1.5% for July, 1.5% for August, 1.5% for September and 1.5% for October). By law, interest is charged at 1.5% per month from the due date of July 1, 2020.

You can view and pay tax bills online at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). You may need to scroll down on the home page to find the view/pay online link. Service fees to pay tax bills online using a credit or debit card are 2.95% or using a Bank account .95 cents.

Payments may be mailed using the envelope enclosed (Town of Columbia, Dept #347, PO Box 150512, Hartford, CT 06115-0512) with your bill or you can put your payment in one of the lock boxes outside of Town Hall or Yeoman's Hall doors.

If you need assistance please contact the Tax Office at 860-228-0230, or via email at [taxcollector@columbiact.org](mailto:taxcollector@columbiact.org). The office hours in July are Monday through Wednesday 8:00-4:00, Thursday 8:00-6:00 and Friday 8:00-12:00. Beginning August 4, 2020, the office hours are Monday through Wednesday 8:00-2:00, Thursday 8:00-6:00 and closed on Friday.

FROM THE TOWN CLERK

Happy Fall!

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

As of July 6, 2020, admittance to the Town Clerk's office is by appointment only. Please call our office at 860-228-3284 to set up an appointment.

For your convenience, a large white drop box has been installed 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.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a separate drop box outside of Town Hall marked for Absentee Ballots ONLY.

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

Take care. Stay safe.

Robin M. Kenefick  
Town Clerk

Gail C. McGrath  
Assistant Town Clerk

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# COLUMBIA TOWN DIRECTORY

DEPARTMENT		OFFICE HOURS	PHONE
<b>Administrative Office:</b>		Mon–Thur 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-0110
First Selectman	Steven M. Everett	Fri 8 am - Noon	
Town Administrator	Mark B. Walter		
Executive Administrative Assistant	Jennifer C. LaVoie		
<b>Assessor's Office:</b>		Mon-Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-9555
Assessor	Mary Lavallee	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
Assistant Assessor	Marcy Littlefield	Fri 8 am -Noon	
<b>Beckish Senior Center:</b>		Mon-Fri 8 am – 3 pm	860-228-0759
Director	Bernadette Derring		
Van Dispatcher/Program Assistant	Margaret Verizzi		
Social Services	Yolanda Irizarry		860-450-7400 x7418
<b>Building Department:</b>		Mon-Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-0440
Building Official	Jason Nowasad	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
Zoning Enforcement	Connie Kisluk	Fri 8 am – Noon	
Town Planner	Paula Stahl		
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	Stephen Postemsky		
Assistant to Building Official	Bud Meyers		
<b>Animal Control:</b>			
Animal Control Officer	Marc Volza		860-337-1222
Assistant Animal Control Officer	Nicole Morey		
<b>Finance Department:</b>		Mon–Thur 8 am – 4:30 pm	860-228-8423
Finance Director	Beverly Ciurylo	Fri 8 am - Noon	
Accountant/Payroll Specialist	Lisa Rose		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	Peter Starkel		
Deputy Fire Chief			
<b>Public Works Department:</b>		Mon-Fri 6:30 am – 3 pm	860-228-4270
Interim Director	Andy Andrews		860-228-0110 ext. 111
Facilities Manager	Bud Meyers		
<b>Recreation Department:</b>		Mon-Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-8513
Recreation Director	Marc Volza	Thur 8 am – 7 pm	
Recreation Assistant	Nicole Morey	Fri CLOSED	
<b>Registrar of Voters:</b>		Varies	860-228-0110
Democrat Registrar	Karen Butzgy		
Republican Registrar	Kate Morrison		
<b>Resident State Trooper:</b>		Mon-Fri 6:30 am – 3 pm	860-228-9846
	Gregory DeCarli		860-465-5400
	Dispatch		
<b>Tax Collector's Office:</b>		Mon-Wed 8 am – 2 pm	860-228-0230
Tax Collector	Carol W. Price	Thur 8 am – 6 pm, Fri CLOSED	
Assistant Tax Collector	Lisa McDonald	<i>extended hours in January and July</i>	
<b>Town Clerk's Office:</b>		Mon-Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-3284
Town Clerk	Robin M. Kenefick	Thur 8 am – 6 pm	
Assistant Town Clerk	Gail McGrath	Fri 8 am – Noon	
<b>Transfer Station:</b>		Wed 8 am – 4 pm	860-228-4270
Transfer Station Attendants	Jacob Osborne & Tristan Kandolin	Sat 8 am – 4 pm	

## Open Burning

The Town of Columbia allows campfires and the burning of brush. Both are governed by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regulations and town ordinance 15-8. These regulations and guidelines can be found online at CT.gov or [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org).

### Campfire Safety

- No permit is required but follow safety guidelines.
- Campfires should not be larger than 3 feet in diameter.
- Burn tree wood only.

### Brush Burning

- A permit is required.
- Do not burn to clear land.
- Brush should be 3 inches in diameter or less.
- Burn piles should not exceed 10 feet in diameter or height.

### Safety Tips for All Fires

- If the smoke affects your neighbors, find a different location to burn.
- Have a 5-gallon bucket of water and a metal rake available, if needed.
- No burning of garbage, furniture, tires, manufactured lumber, stumps, or hazardous materials.
- Do not place fire under electrical lines, the smoke can be a conductor.
- Always burn safely and never leave a fire unattended.

If you have any questions or need to obtain an open burning permit, please contact the Town of Columbia Land Use Department at 860-228-0440.

Michael Lester  
Fire Marshal/Open Burning Official  
Town of Columbia



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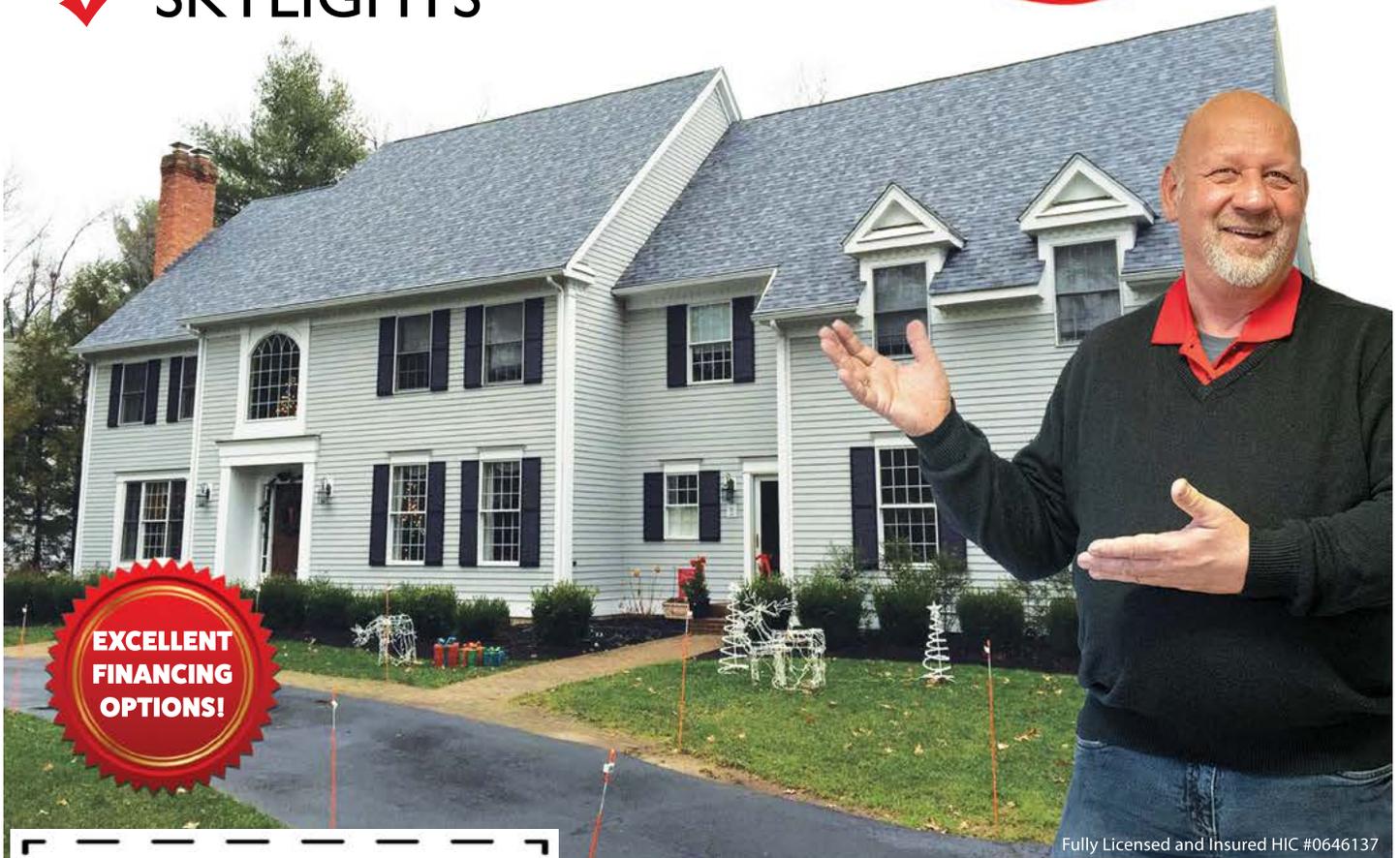
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*Phase One – Columbia’s Transportation Program*

The Town of Columbia’s Transportation Program will start back up with limited seating. Starting, Monday July 6th from 8am to 3pm we will begin providing transportation for our seniors and disabled persons. The seating will be limited on the 14-passenger van to 1 wheelchair and 3 passengers plus your driver. The Town of Columbia is also in the process of purchasing a Ford Escape SUV 2020 for medical transportation. We are hoping to have the medical car ready by end of July 2020. The medical car will also only allow for 2 people plus the driver to insure proper distancing.

If you have a medical appointment or would like to go food shopping please call the senior center to book your rides. Please call Lisa at 860-228-0759 ext. 2 only. I am sure we will be filling up fast due to limited space on the van. To ensure the safety of you and our drivers the following rules will need to be followed:

- 1) You and your caretaker must always wear a mask during your ride.
- 2) We will be using a scanner to check your temperature. If you are running a fever of over 100 degrees, we will not be able to transport you.

- 3) After each round trip per person the driver will wipe down all surfaces of the van to properly sanitize.
- 4) If you are feeling sick on the day of your ride please contact our office as soon as possible to reschedule.
- 5) Sanitizer and gloves will be available on the van.

Thank you!

SENIORS ON THE GO

As you read this, I hope that you are well. It has been a long time since we have had the opportunity to meet and spend time as a group. I wish I could tell you when we will be able to resume our activities, but all I can say is – it is not yet the time. We need to keep following our guidelines for safety and stay well. The programs, trips, movies, and potluck dinners will come back when the time is safe. We would like to thank the town and the senior center for all that they are doing to keep us informed and keeping seniors safe who have needs such as meals and check in calls. We all appreciate it more than you realize. Keep a positive outlook, follow safety guidelines and we will meet again.

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On June 9, 2020, the AHM Board of Directors presented donations in the amount of \$1500.00 to each of the food banks in Andover, Columbia, Hebron, and Marlborough. The donations were made possible through the AHM Front Line Heroes lawn sign campaign. What started out as an idea to honor and recognize local front-line heroes involved in the fight against COVID-19 quickly turned into a region wide fundraiser for five local charities.

According to Bernadette Derring, Director of Sr. Services and Municipal Agent for the Elderly in Columbia, shared: “The continued support to our senior citizens and families in need is beyond imaginable. Reaching everyone with food and support equals love.”

Columbia Town Administrator Mark Walter, who also attended the presentation of checks from AHM also shared: “The partnership with AHM and the Columbia Food Bank is truly a perfect fit. Thank you for all of the financial and emotional help through these trying times.”

The AHM Front Line Heroes project was the vision of Board Member Ed Skopas and his wife Kathy a longtime volunteer with the organization. Together they worked



with the AHM Board of Directors to recognize front-line workers risking their health and selflessly doing for others during the COVID-19 crisis. “We envisioned a sign with a symbol to recognize all of the incredible people that are working so hard to not only care for those directly affected by the virus but also those that regularly interact with the public, endangering their own health and safety every day.” said Ed Skopas.

Steve Fish, AHM’s Board President shared: “the entire AHM board and staff were incredibly touched by the Skopas Family’s vision and support in such a moving way to recognize the heroes living among us and those who we have lost involved in this pandemic.”

According to AHM’s Executive Director Tressa Giordano: “over four hundred lawn signs displayed in our four towns and beyond contain four different color hearts. The red heart symbolizes front-line behavioral health & health care professionals, EMT’s, diagnostic labs & pharmacies. Blue hearts are for first responders, including police, fire departments, National Guard & military. Green hearts represent the food chain, including grocery store workers, food producers, and restaurant workers. Yellow hearts are for the distribution chain work force, including transportation workers, delivery service workers, warehouse & sanitation workers.

In addition to supporting AHM programs, the AHM Board directed additional funds raised from the Front Line Heroes project to be divided equally between the Columbia, Andover, Hebron and Marlborough food pantries.

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In accordance with Section 12-110 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Columbia Board of Assessment Appeals will hold a public meeting for the sole purpose of hearing appeals related to the assessment of motor vehicles on the Grand List of October 1, 2019 and the Supplemental Grand List of October 1, 2018 in the Town of Columbia.

As per Executive Order 7Z, the in-person attendance requirement for assessment appeals has been suspended. **Taxpayers appeals on motor vehicles only will be heard on Thursday, September 10, 2020 starting at 7:00 p.m. by appointment only via Zoom virtual platform.**

**Motor vehicle appeals and supporting documentation must be filed in writing and postmarked no later than Monday, August 24, 2020.** Applications must be completed in their entirety. Appellants are encouraged to provide any documentation they believe support their

appeal. Examples include, but are not limited to, bill of sale from car dealership or used car establishments, repair bills, photos showing condition of vehicle, and photo of odometer reading.

The meeting agenda, appointment confirmation, and Zoom meeting instructions 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](mailto:boardclerk@columbiact.org).

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



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## REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

### August Primary

The Republican and Democratic Primary is being held for in person voting on August 11, 2020 at HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL. Please remember that only registered Republicans and Democrats are eligible to vote in the Primary.

If you are not currently registered to vote, or not currently affiliated with a political party (registered as Unaffiliated), you can enroll in a party via mail until August 6, 2020 or in person until noon on August 10, 2020 and still be eligible to vote in the Primary.

The deadline for requesting an Absentee Ballot is Monday, August 10th at 4pm. For questions about Absentee

Ballots, please contact the Town Clerk at (860) 228-3284.

Due to the current COVID health crisis, we will be following state mandated guidelines to protect the health and safety of Columbia voters as well as our staff. Please check the Registrar of Voters page on the town website for all Primary information including health and safety guidelines. Call or email our office should you have any questions.

Registrars of Voters  
Karen Butzgy – *Democratic*  
Katherine Morrison – *Republican*  
(860) 228-6843 x113  
registrar@columbiact.org

## FRIENDS OF THE SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY

All of us at Friends of the Library hope this finds you all healthy and well and enjoying your summer.

We were hoping to be able to figure out how to safely take donations again and open for the August sale but unfortunately, we realize that logistically, we will not have enough time to prepare the necessary precautions to be able to do so.

At this time, we are working on other ideas to be able to offer used books to all of you in a safe manner until we are able to re-open our sales. We are also working on our safety plan and hope to be able to have a book sale in November, depending on the path the virus takes between now and then. Hopefully we will be able find a way to safely begin taking donations again as soon as possible.

At the end of June we mailed out our Membership Brochures and want to thank all who have renewed your membership with Friends of the Library or have become a new member with us, we understand this has been a trying and unprecedented year so far and truly appreciate your support.

Please join our Facebook page at Friends of the Saxton B. Little Free Library for updates.

Thank you all and stay safe and healthy!

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### A Different Kind of Summer

Last winter, no one could have imagined how different the Summer of 2020 would be. The road to this point has been long, and sadly as I write this, the journey has not reached its end. The last several months in the Library have been tough. Librarians everywhere have had to make decision that we could have never imagined. For me at SBL, the last few months have been among the hardest and most stressful I can recall.

But I am also proud of our Library, staff and community. When our doors shut, we did not delay in continuing our services online. We began to weekly increase our electronic services, update information and adding online “distractions” on our website. We stayed in touch with weekly newsletters and like the rest of world, learned how to Zoom. Our regularly scheduled programs (all 5 book groups, Stitchers, Writers, Story Times and Baby time) continued on. Summer Reading programs for children, adults and teens got a redesign and began in June. We offered unique programs ranging from meditation to music. When possible, we started no-contact curbside pick up and then offered a browsing experience. Although nothing is the same and nothing is ‘normal’, we

have and continue to do what libraries have always done: help our communities.

Although Summer Reading is almost over, there is still time to join us via Zoom on August 4th for a history of bibliotherapy, August 5th to learn about calming herbs, August 10 for a lively discussion about a favorite pod cast, and August 12th to learn how to make your own kombucha! We are even starting a new book club: Read Woke, to discuss contemporary issues such as racism and social change. This book club’s first meeting is August 13. More information can be found on our website ([www.columbiactlibrary.org](http://www.columbiactlibrary.org)) or email us at: [SBL@columbiactlibrary.org](mailto:SBL@columbiactlibrary.org).

It might take a while for all of us to return to what we are used to, but as different as things seem, there are some bright spots: the environment is doing better; families are growing stronger; people are learning to cook and grow plants, and you can still count on the Library as a trustworthy source of information.

The Library, after all, is not just a book and not just a building.

Su Epstein  
Library Director

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Thank you Porter Staff and Columbia Families for working together as we all figured out how best to teach and learn from a distance, and how to navigate a much more complicated world. Porter Staff are now diligently preparing for the reopening of schools so that we are ready to welcome students back to the classroom this fall. While school will look a bit different as we implement new health requirements, we will ensure that our students are welcomed back to warm and engaging classrooms!

Most of all, we thank Columbia students for their patience and flexibility in switching to a new way of learning this past spring. We are impressed with your creativity and persistence. While our graduates were celebrated, we recognize many of the long held traditions were put on hold this year. Please know that our community recognizes your accomplishment, and wishes you well as you launch into many new adventures. Columbia graduates:



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## *Grade Eight Porter Graduates:*

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## *High School Graduates:*

Julia Angelides, Matthew Baker, Benjamin Bessette, Alexis Dudek, Brendon Dukett, Danielle Earnest, Emmanuel Elumogo, Allison Escott, Michaela Finn, Julia Gamache, Giavannah Gorgone, Aiden Grabowski, Alexander Greb, Aidan Holland, Rachel Hughes, Alaina Magaldi, Connor Melroy, Jared Narotsky, Jack Nowycky, Nicolas Person, Brylin Plourde, Colin Plourde, Calvin Riquier, Adam Ruchalski, Nathan Salcedo, Kersten Scanlon, Matthew Schroder, Madison Shea, Autumn Skowrenski, Emma Starkel, Cole Szegda, Dylan Tetreault-Smith, Kailani Therriault, Grace Touhy, Robert Turner, and Autumn Wrana graduated from E.O. Smith High School.

Gabriel Albert, Sean Boisvert, Kathryn Conchado, Jacob Corson, Devin Frommer, Aiden Gamache, Elizabeth Hutter, Grahm Leger, Dylan Morin, Ian Peck, Xavier Robinson, Kellen Spector, Bethany Walsh, and Victoria White graduated from Bolton High School.

Paul Friedmann, Renee Gilchrist, Hendrik Kingo, Kaleigh Ortiz, Giovanni Parla, Amber Peterson, Caleb Smith, Anthony Toce, Alina Torres, and Jayden Tuthill graduated from Windham Tech.

Cora Belekewicz and Catherine Weaver graduated from University High School of Science and Engineering. Savannah Meserve graduated from CT River Academy, LEARN, and Bennett Moseley, Pathways graduated from the Academy of Technology and Design.

Maria Geryk  
*Superintendent*

### Congratulations! Four Hundred Acres Added to the Mono Pond State Park

The Trust for Public Land and the State of Connecticut, with a bit of help from the Towns of Columbia and Lebanon, and many personal donations, have put together the funding to complete the purchase of two parcels in the Wells Woods area. We are especially grateful to the Columbia Historical Society for their generous donation to the cause.

The addition of this land to Mono Pond State Park connects it to the Airline Trail State Park, providing an additional 400 acres, along with increased recreational opportunities. Together with the Mint Brook parcel purchased by the Town of Columbia in 2018, this conserves a part of the Columbia Wells Woods 18th and 19th century “Ghost Town” historic sites. In the future, we hope to acquire more land in this area to connect to the Town of Hebron.

Conserving this land provides benefits for all the people of Connecticut, but especially for Columbia, Lebanon and Hebron. Imagine 1000 acres of conserved forest and wetland maintaining our drinking water supplies and clean air, with habitat for wildlife. Trails for hikers, mountain bikers, and horses will provide recreation for all. We aren’t done yet, but we have made a great start!

Ann Dunnack  
Open Space Committee Chairman



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*Pandemics Don't Quarantine Our Mission!*

Columbia Troops 162B and 162G, along with its adult members and parents, wish our Columbia residents continual good health and safety.

Troops 162G and 162B last met in person Thursday, March 13th, on the eve of a state-wide closure. We spent our last physical meeting holding a Court of Honor celebrat-

ing scout accomplishments: scouts received rank advancement and merit badges were earned. Little did we know we would soon have to figure out how to navigate moving the troop forward while carrying out its mission in a virtual setting. Nevertheless, little has stopped this troop from proceeding in a positive direction!

For 3 months, we held our meetings via a virtual platform. We continued to focus on advancing scouts along in their rank and "doing a good turn daily". While community events (Lion's Club Breakfast, Memorial Day Ceremony, Can and Bottle Collection, and Scrap Metal Drive) were placed on hold, here is what our troop HAS been able to accomplish during these unprecedented times. In April, scouts cleaned up trash along town roads. For Memorial Day, we planted American flags for the Veterans in our town cemeteries. In June, we cleared several overgrown trails at Szegda Farm. We are finding ways to practice social distancing while carrying out the BSA's mission. Look for us in outdoor locations over the summer as we continue to serve our town and safely meet as a troop.

In other exciting news, our Can and Bottle Collection reopened after 3 months of closure (check out our new vinyl sign on the shed)! We are incredibly grateful to our residents for your CT redeemable donations. Additionally, one of our scouts has completed his final rank advancement, and when it is physically safe to do so, a ceremony will be held to officially declare him an Eagle Scout!

Again, Columbia Troop 162 hopes that you can enjoy the remaining days of summer. Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay home. We think Columbia is the perfect place to call home.

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## COLUMBIA LEOS

Congratulations to two of our graduating seniors, President Grace Tuohy and Vice President Gabe Albert.

Grace Tuohy graduated from E.O. Smith this year. Grace was a Leo for six years, serving as secretary, vice president and, finally, president. She took on the unenviable task of leading the Leos over the last couple of months of her senior year, a task that was made even more daunting given the disruptions of the pandemic. Grace represented our club and herself very well. Her engaging demeanor and intense desire to serve her community are among her best attributes. Grace is going on to the University of Vermont, and we wish her much success!

Vice President Gabe also served the club with distinction as an outstanding member, becoming club treasurer and, finally, vice president. Gabe was an eager Leo and an excellent role model for younger members given his strong work ethic and willingness to find ways to better the community. Gabe graduated from Bolton High and is attending UCONN Hartford this fall.

The Columbia Leos 2019-20 year got off to a promising start but came to a halt as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. As the summer of 2019 was winding down, we were just hitting our stride. We helped the Columbia Lions with their annual BBQ; we assisted the Columbia Historical Society with their car and dog shows; we helped the PTO with the Trunk or Treat at Horace Porter School; and we organized the One Warm Coat drive. When 2020 began, we were in the midst of planning our annual Va-

riety Show when the cessation of all public gatherings was announced. However, beginning in March, we were unable to meet in person, plan any public activities or participate in any service projects.

As an organization, we stand ready to roll up our sleeves and get back to work helping our community as we have in the past. We plan to adjust to the challenges that the pandemic has put before our organization and find new and better ways to meet the pressing needs of our fellow citizens.

We will begin our 2020-21 year with President Beth Tangarone taking the helm! Beth has been an outstanding member and has worked with the Columbia Lions and Leos for over a decade! Besides Beth, we have some experienced and enthusiastic members coming back intent on making this upcoming year a productive one.

We are always looking to add new members to our organization. Anyone between the ages of 12-18 may join. As a town resident, it doesn't matter which high school you attend. The Columbia Leos is a service organization that is sponsored by and works with The Columbia Lions. We are a part of Lions International, the largest service organization in the world. We have several community and fundraising projects that we do every year and are always looking for ways to be of service. If you enjoy being involved in the community, have a desire to try to make a difference and would like to be a member please email Lion Jim Blair, Leo Adviser, at [jbland15@earthlink.net](mailto:jbland15@earthlink.net).

Held on June 20, 2020, on Summer Solstice equinox, the “Togetherness Rally” as it was called in Columbia, was organized at the insistence of Tiffany Anderson, representing the Windham/Willimantic NAACP. The request for



this rally, in support of the local Black Community, first came up at the June 16, 2020, Board of Selectman’s meeting conducted via ZOOM. As Tiffany explained, rallies were being organized in the local area towns in response to the tragic and unnecessary death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN. The intent was to affirm support for principles of civility, fairness, and respectfulness that all people in our country have a right to expect, including and especially Black citizens given the recent spate of tragic events involving Black people in many large and small cities.

This rally took place on Columbia’s Green, at the busy intersection of State Highways 66 and 87. Approximate-

ly 75 local individuals, including families with young children and puppy dogs, held hand-made signs “Black Lives Matter”. They waved to truckers and drivers who honked their horns in the affirmative. The

rally participants wore masks and spread apart for safety as Connecticut is now in Phase II re-opening, as of June 17, 2020, of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Town of Columbia requested the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department be ready for safety and health support given the warm weather. State Trooper Officer DeCarli, Troop K, provided traffic protection at this busy and dangerous intersection. First Selectman Steven Everett welcomed the rally-goers to Columbia along with Selectmen Lisa Napolitano and Judy Ortiz. Local residents were notified via letter and social media. By 12:30pm many rally-goers had sought the protection of shade from the hot summer sun, and rally was over by 1:00pm.



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## Fourth of July 2020 on Columbia Lake

Cheers to Columbia Lake Association for proceeding with this pandemic year's Fourth of July Parade of Boats, with all good measure of health and safety precautions, of course. So what are the cultural and historic origins of this neighborhood's delightful display? Yes, there has always been a tradition of public and private patriotic festivity in Columbia, but the August 1995 newsletter of Columbia Lake Association called *The Wave* offers a tantalizing clue.

In an appeal to fellow lakefront homeowners immediately following the 1995 Lion's Club/Town of Columbia Fourth of July Parade commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the end of WWII, Dr. Marc Scoles urged his neighbors to appoint their homes, docks, yards, and boats in red, white and blue...and "wouldn't it be a good idea to have a Fourth of July Parade of Boats" next year [in 1996] too? After all, he asserted, the Parade of Boats had a patriotic precedent in the spontaneous boat parade on Columbia Lake following V-J Day (August 15, 1945) signaling the end of a long and devastating naval war with Japan. The final and formal end of WWII occurred on September 2, 1945, however, with the treaty signed on the USS Missouri. If Dr. Scoles information about the symbolic origins of the very first organized parade of boats is correct, then the Columbia Lake Association's Fourth of July Parade of Boats, now in its 24th year, was inspired by this story marking the end of WWII.

Ingrid Wood  
Town Historian



George joined the Town of Columbia as the Public Works Director over 15 years ago, bringing with him an already impressive resume. George brought the type of skill set, knowledge, and expertise in municipal management from his 26 years at the Town of Manchester to the Town of Columbia.

His progressive and collaborative style of management provided his crew with a definitive approach to any project. Andy Andrews, Public Works Foreman and Tree Warden recalls, "George always approached every project by putting our ideas together collectively to get the project done." George not only provided his crew with an environment to share their ideas, but he was instrumental in passing on his knowledge to his crew and opened new avenues for staff to grow and advance.

George's ability to provide an environment which fostered collaboration and sharing of ideas provided a plethora of success when it came to accomplishing many projects. Of course, there are too many projects to mention, but some of the significant project that George accomplished were:

- Numerous upgrades at the Town Beach which included a significant reconstruction project of the Town beach and pavilion making these areas ADA accessible; installation of a new concrete pier; seawall, and concrete stairs from the kayak shed to the lake.
- Upgrades to Szegda Farm which included the reconstruction of the Szegda Farm Open Space pole barn and new storage room, new parking lot, and a new well with a solar powered well pump.
- Various upgrades to the Department of Public Works buildings which included a new salt storage facility and new fueling station.
- Major park improvements to Columbia Recreation Area including a multi-purpose field; new roadway; walking trails and drainage; granite posts along walkways; new support columns for the pavilion, and major electrical upgrades.

- Renovations and upgrades to the History Place; Town Hall; Senior Center; Maintenance Garage Facility, and Board of Education.
- Roof replacements for the Beckish Senior Center, Town Hall, Murphy House, Moor's School, Town Hall Annex, Library, Chapel, Rec Park Pavilion, Szegda Farm Open Space Barn, and the Boat House.
- Reconstruction of the Hop River Bike Trail.
- Bridge replacements including Parker Bridge, Roses Bridge and Baker Hill Bridge, and repairs to Village Hill Bridge.
- Major renovation project for the Columbia Lake Dam.

Although this list is only the tip of the iceberg on George's major accomplishments, it is equally important to point out that George was a very easy person to work with.

Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director said, "George has always been great to work with and always willing to help out. George would step up where needed – especially with his crew by plowing, directing traffic, mowing, moving boxes, or wherever needed. George knew the proper way to handle all situations, both simple as well as difficult. He was an asset to the Town and will be missed by the town staff."

Mark Walter, Town Administrator said, "George made everyone successful by managing projects with professionalism, while accomplishing both quality and economy in mind. George will be missed, and he has left Columbia a better place. In addition, Steven Everett, First Selectman concurred

with Mark's sentiments, "George made my job easier, by doing his job well... extremely well! He will be missed."

George's passion is his boat, and we wish him fair winds and following seas – a safe journey and good fortune in his retirement. The Town of Columbia, especially the staff, will deeply miss his knowledge, his camaraderie, and friendship.



The Lebanon North Parish, now Columbia, had been known as “The Lebanon Crank”, the Second Society, until ultimately renamed “Columbia” when residents separated from the town of Lebanon in 1804.

How did our community settle on the name Columbia? Obviously, the name was associated with Christopher Columbus, but in the late eighteenth century a symbolic meaning arose that extended well beyond its simple association with Columbus. The term Columbia came to be adored, and when chosen for our community it reflected the pride our residents had in their town and country: The Revolution had been fought and won, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of our country, and in the mid-1700s Lebanon Crank was among the largest towns in Connecticut.

We can't go back and ask why the citizens chose the name “Columbia”, but we can trace likely reasons for its choice. It is also interesting to note that the choice of name was novel and different. Most New England Towns at that time were named for English towns, Indian tribes, biblical sites, or named for mill owners like Sprague or Sayles.

An early use of the name was made in 1696 by poet and Judge Samuel Sewall of Massachusetts in the poem “Columbina”. Sewall wrote numerous poems extolling the beauty of New England, and the poem's female character “Columbina” was a very early personification of the American colonies. If that poem launched the term, then a popular British periodical popularized it. In 1738 a column in *The Gentlemen's Magazine* by Samuel Johnson used the term “Columbia” as a code name for the colonies when leaking private discussions from the British Parliament. The political gossip in this column was of high interest to colonial Americans eager to hear news from their mother-country.

Drawings of a statuesque, female character soon came to represent the American colonies in newspapers and periodicals and she was recognized as “Columbia”. In pre-revolutionary times this cartoon was often displayed as a somewhat savage, bare-breasted woman with feathers in her hair, reflecting the British view of American colonial life. After the revolution, however, her image changed: she was drawn dressed in classical garb, and her image softened. “Americans started to embrace her name and Columbia took on a poetic feel, representing a nostalgic, positive image of America”. (*Atlantic Magazine*, 2013).

Perhaps the most compelling reason for Lebanon Crank's new name might have been a piece of music. Music has a



way of evoking feelings and emotions, and the music and lyrics of “Hail, Columbia!” certainly further popularized the name. This march was written for George Washington's inauguration in 1789, but it was probably when the lyrics were attached to it in 1798 that it became our unofficial national anthem. Surely this song would have been well-known to Crank residents. The song reads, “Hail, Columbia! “Happy Land! ... Let independence be our boast!”. When residents were looking for a new name in 1804, this song surely would have been close to their hearts. The mellifluous tones and cheerful lyrics of this anthem were likely a big influence on the choice of our town's name.

Our Columbia forbears were not the only ones to adopt this name. To

demonstrate how popular the name “Columbia” was to become, 11 major cities and townships in at least 31 states also seized upon its popularity in the 19 century. Rivers, universities, recording and movie companies, motor and bicycle companies, and spaceships also used the name well into the next two centuries. However, it appears that only Columbia, SC, and Washington, District of Columbia, used the name prior to Columbia, CT. If it was a trendy name, our Columbia for-bears were trend-setters.

In 1801 the scientific community was excited to discover a new element which they named “Columbium”, more evidence of the growing use of the name. It is unlikely that the placement of this element on the Periodic Table of Elements would have inspired the town's name, but it is highly likely that many in our early community followed scientific and technological news. This discovery was made because a young scientist, John Winthrop, Jr., (and later Governor of CT) spotted an extraordinary ore containing the element when he exploring Connecticut in 1735. He suspected it was so special that he sent it to the British Museum for analysis where, years later, the new element was extracted.

Times change, and names have meaning that reflect the times. Columbus is not now honored as he once was, the feminine character Columbia has been replaced by Uncle Sam, “Hail, Columbia!” has been replaced by the Star Spangled Banner, and even the element Columbium has been replaced by Niobium. Yet, “Columbia” has left her legacy. Those that named our town broke from earlier traditions of naming towns to celebrate the new pride, industry, discovery, and patriotism of the times. Those of us living here today of are still proud of our Columbia heritage.

Kathy Tolsdorf

The Ruef Family's house at 4 Yeomans Road in Columbia has been haunted since 1986.

Well, it's only haunted on Halloween night from 6:30 to 8:00, and it's just the garage that's haunted, but for that hour and a half our family and friends put on a good scary show for both the kids and the adults who visit every year. It's free, takes about five minutes to go through and we give out candy to the kids at the end.

We empty out the garage and hang cardboard walls from the ceiling in a long "hallway" that turns and twists in the semi-dark while monsters swing out in front of people and actors in costumes roam around to frighten visitors. The arrangement of the walls is different every year, as is the Haunted House's theme, so there's something new to experience from one Halloween to the next.

In 2019 the theme was "Pirates of Mono Pond," the highlight of which was The Mono Pond Shark coming up out of the water with its blood-red mouth and rows of sharp teeth opening to swallow those getting too close, all in the dark and fog and lit by a slowly flashing strobe light. Bet you didn't know there's a Great White in Mono Pond, did you?

Over the years we've done a Wild West theme, a Vampire Castle, Dr. Frankenstein's Lab, a take-off on the movie "Psy-



cho" which starred Saddam Hussein in the shower scene (with a strategically placed towel that had a disabled mouse trap under it for the curious), and quite a few others. For 2020 the theme is "Night of The Living Dead" with zombies. We won't give away any more than that.

The whole thing was inspired thirty-five years ago by a magazine article about a family that did an annual haunted house in their living room with sheet-covered ghosts roaming around and people sitting in chairs as if they were dummies, jumping up in the low-lit room to scare guests.

There have been different staff people over time, but for the past few years the crew has been Richard and Sally Ruef, our son Michael and his girlfriend Stacey Sroka, and a friend and neighbor, Dr. Charles Wynn. For 2020 we're adding Sally's brother Jim Pope and his wife Pearl.

Come visit us Halloween night between 6:30 and 8:00!

Just be sure to check for our street signs first: Because of the virus we may not be having the haunted house this year. Signs will be up the weekend of the 24th - 25th at corner of Hunt Rd and Rte 66 and at the corner of Pine St and Rte 66. If they're there, we're doing it! If not, no.

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Board of Selectman (BOS) for the Town of Columbia consists of the First Selectman and four other members each of whom shall be known as a selectman. No more than three members of such board shall be members of the same political party. This board serves as a Columbia's chief executive body. They have overall responsibility for the general operations of town government. This basic function consists of calling town meetings, proposing budgets to Town Meeting, setting public policy, calling elections, licensing, setting certain fees, overseeing certain volunteer and appointed bodies, and creating basic regulations.

Steven Everett is the First Selectman and was elected to that office in 2017. His experience serving on other Town boards as well as being a member of the BOS for 4 previous years has prepared him for this position. William O'Brien has served on the BOS since 2009 and ensures that a logical process is followed while assessing issues that lead to informed decisions. Rob Hellstrom has been a member of the BOS since 2010. His experience as a professional surveyor enables him to understand land management and guides the board as we process related information. Lisa Napol-

itano was elected to the BOS in 2017. She ensures that the townspeople of Columbia are well informed when policy changes are being proposed. I, Judy Szegda Ortiz, am the newest member to the BOS, being elected in 2019. I have lived in Columbia for most of my life and have served as an officer on different boards and commissions. I feel that it is important to listen to concerns, assess the issues and make decisions that positively affect the community.

All the members of the BOS are very cognizant of budget constraints and work hard to maintain services that do not significantly affect the mill rate. The BOS meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held in the Adele Urban Conference Room at Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. and the public is invited to attend.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have opened meetings through Zoom and welcomed anyone interested to join the live meeting.

Please feel welcome to submit any questions, ideas or concerns with an email to [PublicInput@columbiact.org](mailto:PublicInput@columbiact.org).

Judy Ortiz

## COMMUNITY GARDEN

### *Community Garden, Graduating Seniors Working on Community Improvements*

Two E.O. Smith High School graduates Brendon Dukett and Grace Touhy have grown up in Columbia. When it came time to choose a topic for their senior year community service project the Columbia Community Garden, located on Szegda Farm property was their choice. Brendon, who loves gardening with his grandparents, researched the mental health benefits of gardening as it has grown in popularity as a therapeutic option for children and adults.

Brendon donated his required 8 hours of community service time to the garden. He was the enthusiastic young muscle that maintained garden paths, hauled wood chips and did a whole lot of weeding around a newly installed 10-foot-high fence. He impressed gardeners with his knowledge of gardening, enthusiasm for hard work and eagerness to give back to his community. He will be missed. We wish him well as he begins his freshman year at UConn with plans to major in History.

Grace Touhy wanted to learn about pollinators and chose to research the importance of bees as pollinators, the decline of the honey bee population and its effect on our food sources. Grace offered to create a community storage box for the garden - in addition to her hours donated at a garden work day arranged by Brendon. Her research informed her that pollinators are attracted to plants with blue, purple and yellow flowers. The storage box arrived at the garden on July 9th adorned with colorful flowers painted around the box and the words Columbia Garden of Eatin'. The garden box will double as a lovely bench for



wearily gardeners to sit upon when enjoying the wonders and marvels to be seen and heard at the garden. We wish Grace the best of luck at the University of Vermont.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Community Garden and available plots can do so by contacting Marc Volza at the Columbia Recreation Department or Millie Ramsey at millieramz@gmail.com. Gardening requires some advance planning and fall is a great time to prepare a new garden for use in Spring 2021.

Anyone interested in having a secure area for a beehive or two should also contact the Recreation Department.

Millie Ramsey

## MOLLY'S MARKET

Molly's Market is a traditional style farmer's market that is taking place at Heartstone Farm and Winery in Columbia CT. From 3-6pm every Thursday August 6th-October 29th you will find fresh home grown products from local farmers. Vendors include Field Engineer Farm, Wilkinson Farm, Cambera Farm, Granny's Pie Factory and more. Molly's Market is still looking for more vendors to join the market. If you are interested send an email to mollysmarketct@gmail.com for more information. Be sure to check out the Molly's Market's Facebook page and Instagram @mollysmarketct for everything from getting to know the market's vendors, to recipes and farming tips.



**Molly's Market**  
Columbia, CT

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