

A red cardinal is perched on a decorative metal bird feeder. The feeder has a central vertical post with two large, stylized leaf-like cutouts. The background is a soft, out-of-focus scene of falling snow. The title 'Columbia VIEWS' is overlaid on the top portion of the image, with 'Columbia' in a white script font and 'VIEWS' in a white serif font. A yellow rectangular border frames the top and right sides of the title area.

Columbia
VIEWS

Volume 7 • Issue 1
Winter 2023

Your Hometown Connection • Columbia, CT



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

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

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

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

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

Construction of Department of Public Works Office

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

Recreation Park - The following Recreation Park projects were completed.

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

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

Columbia Volunteer Fire Department Upgrade to Mobile and Portable Radios and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system - The upgrade to the mobile and portable radios will provide improved communications

Continued on page 14

FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MARK B. WALTER

Dear Columbia Residents:

We had a very productive year with all our projects to improve Rec Park finishing with a Winter Wonderland light show including our fire department with Santa and Mrs. Claus. The fire Department also had a big 75th year milestone event. Public Works took down countless trees repaired and replaced many culverts and even rebuilt a culvert bridge at Erdoni Road in only one weeks' time. We had a wonderful celebration of our Beckish Senior Center for its 25 years of serving our seniors.

Thank you to every employee, commission, and com-

mittee member for the great job of running our town in 2022!

Now begins the time and commitment of our Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and Financial Planning and Allocation Commission working with our employees to prepare a budget to present in our public meetings. We encourage you to express your comments and concerns by asking questions through emailing us at: PublicInput@columbiact.org.

You can also join our workshops in person or via zoom.

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On the cover

Photo by Paul Ramsey.

2023 VIEWS Magazines Schedule

2nd Q/23

COLUMBIA: Ad Deadline 4/7/2023
Mailed Week of 5/8/2023

HEBRON: Ad Deadline 5/5/2023
Mailed Week of 6/5/2023

3rd Q/23

COLUMBIA: Ad Deadline 7/7/2023
Mailed Week of 8/7/2023

HEBRON: Ad Deadline 8/4/2023
Mailed Week of 9/4/2023

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Columbia Views
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Permanent Absentee Ballots

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

Births-Deaths-Marriages

Certified copies of vital events such as births, deaths and marriages are available from the Town Clerk. A request application and positive identification are necessary to obtain a certified copy. There is a fee of \$20.00 for each certified copy requested.

Probate Court

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

Dogs

If you are new to Columbia and have not registered your dog with us or you have a new dog that is at least six

months of age, please contact our office. You will need an updated rabies vaccination certificate and a spayed/neutered certificate, if applicable, to license your dog.

Fishing and Hunting

Sports licenses for 2023 are available for purchase in the Town Clerk's office and on the DEEP website. The DEEP invites you to go to their website <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP-CT-Outdoor-Guides> for downloadable PDFs of their fishing and hunting guides.

The Town Clerk's office is fully open to the public. We are here for those services you might need – Recording and Searching of Land Records, Certified copies of Vital Records, Marriage licenses, Dog Licenses, Transfer Station stickers, Fishing and Hunting licenses, etc.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us (860-228-3284) or reach out to us by email – Robin (townclerk@columbiact.org) or Gail (atownclerk@columbiact.org).

Robin M. Kenefick, Columbia Town Clerk

Gail C. McGrath, Columbia Assistant Town Clerk

FIRE MARSHAL

Midwinter Checkup

We are in the middle of the heating season, so now is a good time to do a safety check on all of your heating devices. All combustibles should be at least 36" away from any heating source. Chimneys, power vents, and make-up air systems must be clean and clear for proper operation. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors should be tested to make sure they are in working order. Any alarm or detector that is over ten years old should be replaced entirely. Lastly, all ash should be disposed of properly. Always ensure ash is extinguished and placed outside safely away from combustibles. Please feel free to contact the Land Use Department with any questions at 860-228-0440.



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When the Beckish Senior Center opened in July of 1997, Columbia resident, Jay Smith volunteered his time and his craft to create a hand-carved sign for the grand opening of the center. Jay is a lifelong resident of Columbia, and he takes great pride in his work. For over 33 years, Jay has been wood carving and made many items from wood including patio decks, bulkheads, furniture, signs and so much more. He is truly a very talented craftsman.

The Beckish Senior Center sign has remained undamaged despite the harsh New England weather for 25 years. You may ask yourself, how is that even possible? Well, Jay made the original sign out of Redwood, the last of the obtainable Redwood at the time. Redwood is known for its impressive resistance to decay. Jay made some minor needed repairs to the existing sign and did a total sand down, fresh primer and paint. The sign looks brand new!

Jay believes in giving back to the community and creating a legacy. You never know where you will come across his work here in Columbia. A few signs that come to



mind are Starkey's Christmas Tree Farm and the Saxton B. Little Library sign.

Thank you, Jay, for your continued support here in Columbia! Your craft is truly a work of art! Thank you for rejuvenating the Beckish Senior Center sign so it can last another 25 plus years.

SENIORS ON THE GO

Winter is here following a joyful holiday season. It was great to be able to celebrate more of our holiday traditions with friends and family after the past years of scaled down events. Since the last issue of Columbia Views, the Columbia Seniors have hosted the Veterans' Day luncheon, held a successful Harvest to Holly Fair, and had a wonderful time at our Holiday Potluck and White Elephant Grab-bag Party. It is so good to be able to get together again.

Right now we are in the middle of our winter movie season. Every Thursday at 1:00 we meet for a movie with popcorn and other goodies. We just watched Gypsy, and Robin Hood (with Russell Crowe). There are more classics coming up with a sprinkling of newer movies. Join us any Thursday with the caveat that if the weather is bad, the movie will be cancelled.

Our annual tag sale will be coming up on Saturday, April 15 from 9:00 to 2:00. We will be accepting donations in the two weeks before the sale so start setting aside those items that you have accumulated while downsizing and spring cleaning. As always we can use your help on that Friday and Saturday with set up and selling. Along with all the great items that will be on sale, we will serve lunch and have a bake sale.

There are so many other weekly activities that the Columbia Seniors' and the Beckish Senior Center provide, we hope to see more and more of you. Please check the Senior Center's newsletter, The Gem, for up to date information about special events, meals, card games, social groups, and trips. It is so important that we keep contact with one another, establish new relationships, and socialize with new friends.

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As we enter the heart of winter, the world can seem a pretty bleak place. So, now might be a good time to remind all that the Library can offer some respite to the bluster of February. Sure, we books and magazines to keep you company as you curl up with a hot drink and warm blanket, and thousands of DVDs for those dark nights, but that's just the beginning!

If you are a crafter, consider joining our Wednesday afternoon Stitcher's group. Not your think? Check out an audio book and listen while you work or try our streaming music services, it's like Spotify without the ads.

Maybe you're looking for something a bit more exciting? How about origami or competitive Scrabble? In our Experience kits, you'll find a DVD, a book, and what you need to try out a new experience. Want to try a new hobby, not only do we have many how to books, but we also share knitting needles, crochet hooks, and small looms. Planning a gathering to chase the February blues away? Or maybe you'd like to surprise your sweetheart with a

ring on Valentine's Day? Be sure to check out Saxton's stuff where you'll find odd items from a ring sizer to a black light, a pedometer to a telescope, and a bubble machine to a microscope. If it's time for some improvement projects, Saxton also has a stud finder. You never know what the mouse has in his closet.

But maybe you're tired of being home. Not only are we always happy to see you in the Library, but we can also help you get to other places. Be sure to check out the Library's collection of museum passes for discounted or free admission to locations in CT and MA.

Beyond all that the Library offers our community, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for what you offer us! We thank you for using our collection, offering your insights, and for all your support during this past holiday season!

Onwards to Spring!

Su Epstein, *Library Director*



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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 but is not limited to: 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 1, 2022 in order to receive an exemption against their 2023 tax bill.

Active Duty Service Members: must submit an application to the Assessor's Office in order to receive 2022 Motor Vehicle benefits no later than December 2023. A copy of your orders or ID is required. The application can be found on our website, and emailed to mlavallee@townofcolumbiact.org

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.

Local option Veterans programs such as Gold Star Parents, Disabled veterans motor vehicle exemptions and increased exemption for 100% disabled veterans added in 2022. Please see specifics on the assessor's website.

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 2023 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.

Handicapped Modified 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 \$2000.

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.

Most applications can be found on our town website.

For questions on any of these programs, please call 228-9555.

Reminder and Notice

The Homeowners program will start accepting applications again as of February 1, 2023. If you are already in the program, you will receive a letter from us reminding you to file. If you are not already in the program, you will need to bring a copy of your 1040 income tax forms for 2022 to our office once they are completed or all your income information if you do not file income taxes. We cannot accept paperwork before February 1st. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 860-228-9555.

Porter Pals

Preschool Lottery Registration

If you have a child who will be turning 3 or 4 years old by Dec. 31, 2023 and would like them to be considered for the lottery, please go to www.hwporter.org and click on Preschool Registration in the middle of the page. Then please click on Preschool Screening/Lottery. There will be a link to register your child. Registration for the lottery will close at 3:30pm on Thursday, March 30, 2023. We will be holding the Lottery on Friday, March 31. If your child will be turning 5 prior to Dec. 31, 2023, then your child is eligible for Kindergarten and not Preschool. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585.

Preschool Screenings

The Early Childhood Team of Horace W. Porter School is pleased to announce that we will conduct Preschool Screenings for Columbia 2-year and 9-month-old (turning 3 by December 31, 2023) and any 4-year-old not previously screened (and not turning 5 by December 31, 2023). Please call Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585 if you would like your child to be screened. All public-school systems in Connecticut are responsi-

CORRECTION

In Volume 6, Issue 4, Fall 2022 under Horace W. Porter School, Transportation – When thanking the bus drivers, we incorrectly posted the names of students.

**Horace W. Porter School
Kindergarten Registration**

Horace W. Porter School is collecting registration for students entering Kindergarten for the upcoming 2023/2024 school year. Parents/guardians of children who will be 5 years old by December 31, 2023, are asked to register their child by completing the online Kindergarten Registration by visiting our website at hwporter.org. Once your online registration is complete you will receive information in your email regarding Kindergarten Orientation. If you have any questions, contact Tammy Nye at (860) 228-9493 ext. 161.



ble for the identification of children who may be eligible to receive special education services. The early childhood team in Columbia offers preschool developmental screenings for current resident children. The purpose of this screening is to collect information about each preschooler's early development in the areas of cognition, communication, motor functioning, and social interaction. This will help us to determine whether your child needs any special services in order to prepare for school success. If you have concerns about a child that has not yet turned 3, please contact the CT Birth-to-Three program at (800) 505-7000.

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AHM YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

AHM is a non-profit charitable organization with the purpose to promote and support the health and well-being of children, youth, and families. Residents of Andover, Columbia, Hebron, and Marlborough can access the extensive network of social and human services that AHM provides.

Recently, AHM installed a Here 4 You Little Library right here in Columbia. AHM staff created a lending library of books on a range of mental health topics to help residents feel more at ease talking about mental health concerns. The Here 4 You Little Library was designed to help normalize mental health for children and teens, reminding them that there are resources and professionals to help them get through times in life when they may feel overwhelmed. Books for families of preschool-aged children through teens, young adults, and adults will be available. Reading materials in the libraries will be free and paid for through a Directed Local Funds grant provided to AHM from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts. Columbia's Here 4 You Little Library can be found



at the Murphy House located at the Town Beach near the Recreation and Social Services offices. This resource is available year-round.

The AHM TASKs Program is a partnership with the town of Columbia to assist the seniors within the community. The TASKs Program works with Columbia Senior Services to help improve the quality of life for residents age 60 and older, by providing them with the assistance and support of a youth TASKs worker. Teens, ages 14 through 18 years old, are paid for their time and asked to complete chores such as light household cleaning, raking leaves, and mowing lawns.

AHM introduces two new staff members: Christina Burdzy Herrick, Student Support Services Counselor at Horace W. Porter School and Columbia Resident Ann Marie Drury, Individual Giving and Events Planning Coordinator.

To learn more about the many different services and opportunities, upcoming programs, and events please visit www.ahmyouth.org. AHM Youth and Family Services is also on Facebook and Instagram.

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February, for being the shortest month of the year, is certainly not lacking in substance—history, holidays, special causes, love, and romance. On February 4th, Columbia Parks and Recreation is kicking off the month with an event to empower young girls and women through sports as a part of **National Girls and Women in Sports Day**. In collaboration with E.O. Smith High School athletics, girls ages 8–13, will be participating in interactive sport clinics. The program's intent is to expose girls to various sports and wellness activities, teach participants about Title IX and empowering girls through sport, and peer mentoring—high school student athletes 'giving back' via sports they have enjoyed by teaching young girls and inspiring them through positive role modeling. The Girls in Sports Day program is expecting over 100 participants from Columbia and surrounding towns.



February also brings excitement to our Youth Recreation Basketball League. The season began in early December

and will conclude in late February with play-offs. The program has co-ed teams for kindergarten/1st grade, 2nd grade, followed by inter-town play for boys' and girls' teams for 3rd/4th, 5th/6th and 7th/8th grade.

Be sure to follow us on our Instagram and Facebook page for updates on programs and future events. With Spring right around the corner, keep an eye out for March Madness, egg hunt fun and road race events.

Winter Wonderland Lights up Rec Park Twice! Mother Nature tried to squelch the colorful lights and festive holiday spirit flowing in Rec Park with lots of rain and wind in late December. Those who braved it found delight in visiting Santa and Mrs. Claus with cookies and cocoa, toasting marshmallows, and eating s'mores by an open fire, and enjoying holiday music and lights. In January, round two of Winter Wonderland was highlighted as a Walk Thru instead of a Drive Thru, with a scavenger hunt brought into the mix.



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Continued from page 1

for the Department of Public works, Emergency Management, Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD), and the State Police. The upgrade was funded with the American Rescue Plan Funds.

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

HVAC and Exhaust System Upgrade to CVFD building

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

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

HVAC Systems for the Town Hall and Murphy House -

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

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

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

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations - Eversource and United Illuminating, as well as funds available as part of the US settlement with Volkswagen will be provide grant funding for Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

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

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

Beckish Senior Center Programs: Digital Literacy Program and R U Ok Program

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

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

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

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett, First Selectman
severett@columbiact.org
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Lion Honored for Exceptional Service—Lion Bob Fowler was given the Rose Amanda Freeman Award on November 14, 2022, by district Governor Sue Fisher (photo at right). Lion Bob has worked tirelessly to provide eye screenings to students in Columbia and neighboring towns. Since 2017 Lion Bob and his team of Columbia Lions have screened over 6,000 students in grades K-8. The screening is done using a portable Spot Vision camera that detects eye problems and provides immediate results to school health staff and parents.

Peace Poster Winners—Two 7th-grade students at Horace Porter School, Paityn Cranick and Lexi Garrison, were chosen as first-place and runner-up winners, respectively, in this year's Lions Peace Poster Contest. Each winner was given an Amazon Gift card from the Columbia Lions. The winning posters were designed to capture this year's theme, Lead With Compassion. Paityn Cranick's poster will be submitted to a juried competition along with other 1st-place winners from Lions District 23C. Both posters will be on public view in the lobby of the Saxton B. Little Free Library.

4th of July Parade—The Columbia Lions Club is eager to make the parade on July 4, 2023, the biggest and best ever! The Lions are calling upon everyone – individuals, families, organizations – to become participants in the parade itself. We invite members of our community to design a float that reflects the parade's theme and walk the parade route along with the marching bands, fire trucks, and other civic groups. Your float will be eligible to win a prize if it captures the parade theme in both spirit and style. (The theme for the parade will be announced early in 2023.) The prizes are: 1st Place \$250, 2nd Place \$150, 3rd Place \$100.

For more information on entering the parade and designing your own float, contact Lion Tom at 860-578-7073 or email us at ColumbiaCtLions@gmail.com.

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Happy New Year from the Columbia Leos! The Leo's have been busy since September! We helped the Columbia Lions at their Camp Rising Sun Dinner in October. In November we had a successful One Warm Coat Drive. We accepted gently used coats, hats, mittens, warm weather socks. These donations were passed along to WAIM. Thanks to all who generously donated to help us with our efforts! We received over 50 items with 14 received at The Columbia Lion's Annual Gazebo Lighting! A great time was had by all with Rick Cooper leading us in song; the Girl Scouts led by Susan Smith supplied wonderful baked goods and Santa stopped by to wish us well! With Scout Troop 162 collecting food, it was a wonderful evening! In January we started our Food and Fuel Drive. We will be at The Congregational Church Breakfasts in January, February, and March to receive food items for The Columbia Food Pantry and ask for donations to The Town of Columbia Fuel assistance Program. The Congregational Church Breakfasts held on the second Saturdays of the month are not to be missed, if you haven't been! The food and service is wonderful! We will continue our Fuel Drive at a Concert hosted by The Columbia Arts

Council at the Beckish Senior Center on January 29th. As we head into winter, we feel it's important to continue to raise awareness of The Town of Columbia's Fuel Assistance Program. Your donations to this program will help Columbia residents directly. Thanks to all who have and continue to support this program.

We will host our Annual Variety Show on April 29, 2023! For information about tickets, sponsorships and advertising please contact Leo Advisor Lion Jim Blair.

The Leos meet in The Band Room at Horace Porter School. Please feel free to contact Advisor, Lion Jim Blair at jbland15@earthlink.net if you might be interested in joining! Our requirements are ages 12-18, and you are Columbia resident. Lion Jim Blair will also be able to provide information on exact meeting dates and times.

The Columbia Leos are thankful for the support of our town as we pledge our commitment to fulfill our motto: "We Serve"!

Contact Information:

Lion Jim Blair, Advisor

860-428-2916 • Jbland15@earthlink.net

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Greetings and Happy New Year! We would like to share a big thank you for the generous support of local families through the Columbia social service program. Through your donations and gifts, we were able to share holiday meals, food gift cards and gifts with 33 children and their parents, and 12 seniors.

In addition to donations and gifts, we would also like to thank the volunteers who shopped for gifts, wrapped them, helped with sorting, distribution, and delivery to the families. This would not have been possible without all of you, and we greatly appreciate your willingness to be a helping hand for the families in Columbia.

Donations were made by, The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Saint Columba Church, The Columbia Lions Club, The Horace Porter School Staff, The Columbia Congregational Church, The Holiday Giving Tree, The Cardless Holiday Fund, Roberto's Log Cabin and many, many generous Columbia residents past and present. Our hearts have been touched by your readiness to fill the gap where it needs to be filled. We will be doing outreach

through 2023 during Easter, back to school, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. We look forward and appreciate your continued support!

On Behalf of the Families we serve,
Debby Smith & Nancy Millerd



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REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE

DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

With the new year upon us, it's a time to reflect on 2022 and what's ahead. The Columbia Republican Town Committee has maintained a steadfast commitment of engaging with the residents of our town and working towards positive change. This means looking to what we can improve upon while maintaining what we hold dear.

A primary goal is outreach and feedback. Whether it is how the town spends your hard-earned tax dollars or the education your child receives, we want your input. Whether the issue is how Columbia regulates how you manage private property through zoning regulations or how taxpayer owned open space is utilized, we need to understand your point of view. We can't stress enough how important engagement is, and we are working hard to keep you informed.



The flip side of that coin is your involvement in town governance and you holding elected officials accountable. Attending meetings on a regular basis is a vital civic duty. And not just to observe or address topics that affect you directly but to listen to everything you can. You may be surprised at what you hear.

Last October, the CRTC held a fall festival event at Rec Park. It was a great success! Along with having fun, our goal was to engage in productive conversations and hear from you, regardless of party. We want to thank all of those who attended and made it a resounding success!

We will be holding more events throughout 2023 and hope that you can attend! Along with another fall festival, we will have gatherings in the spring and summer. These family-friendly events serve the purpose of having fun but also of engaging.

Finally, the CRTC will be holding "listening" sessions at the town hall meeting room the second Thursday of each month from 7 to 8pm. These informal get-togethers with various elected officials will allow you to learn more about what is being done on your behalf and give you an opportunity to express your honest concerns.

Reach out to us directly or follow us on Facebook to stay updated on these important events!

The Columbia Democratic Town Committee (CDTC) will host a **Civic Forum** for residents of Columbia on March 14 7:00-9:00PM at The Beckish Senior Center. The purpose of the Civic Forum is to provide an opportunity for Columbia residents to learn how their town government functions. Additionally, the CDTC hopes that the forum will spur civic engagement and participation. Two Representatives from each—the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Education, the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission, and the Planning and Zoning Commission—will comprise a moderated panel discussion regarding their roles and processes in town government. We encourage members of the community to ask questions of panel members. We will video record the event (with signed waivers) and post it on the CDTC Facebook page. We encourage Columbia residents to attend and will provide refreshments and an opportunity for socializing following the formal panel discussion.

For more information, visit the CDTC Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078885672002&sk=about>, or contact us at susan.spiggle@gmail.com

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COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Exploring Paths to Full Accessibility

Columbia Congregational Church is on a path to becoming accessible to all who would like to attend and participate in our activities. We have a team exploring ways that we can accomplish this.

In December we were able to create spaces in the sanctuary for wheelchair, walker and/or stroller use so that families and friends could sit together. Another project that we are working on, is looking into ways to assist with transportation to and from activities. Come check out our progress and watch us as we become a place that is accessible to all while maintaining our heritage.

Columbia Cardless Holiday Fund 2022

The following people made donations to the Columbia Cardless Holiday Fund 2022. This fund is sponsored by the Columbia Congregational Church and is used year-round to help Columbia residents. We thank them for their generosity in helping their neighbors in need.

Rick/Elaine Carone
Lynn/Bob Owens
Andrew/Diana/Emil Sadlon
anonymous
Pearce/Maheu Family
Debby/Mark Smith
Narkawicz Family
Pam/Les Giddings
Jackie Kittle
anonymous
Peter/Michele Dumaine
George/Madeline Skinner
Rich/Sally Ruef
Carmen Vance
Joyce Nasin
Mahlon/Cathy Gilbert



WELCOME!
FEBRUARY – APRIL HAPPENINGS

Services 10 AM Sundays with Rev. MaryAnn Purtil
Church School during services 1st & 3rd Sundays
Outdoors with God for all Ages on the 4th Sunday 2 PM
Bible Study Thursdays 10:30 AM

EASTER Services: 6:30 AM Sunrise at Camp Asto Wamah
April 9th 10 AM Easter Celebration Service

Community Breakfasts monthly on the 2nd Saturday
Simple Sustenance Soup, Bread, Pierogis on the 4th Sunday

For details check out our webpage: Columbiacongregationalchurch.org

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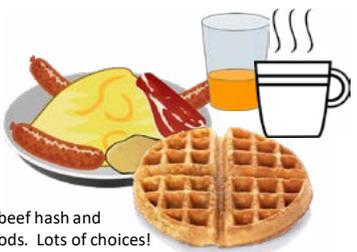



2nd Saturday Community Breakfasts

Feb. 11 Mar. 11
Apr 8 May 13

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8 AM to 11 AM
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Buffet includes design-your-own omelets, Belgian waffles, corned beef hash and two other meats, hash browns, scrambled eggs, fruit and home baked goods. Lots of choices!

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Apr	23	Corn Chowder	Molasses Brown Bread
May	21	Zuppa Toscana	Sun-Dried Tomato Basil Bread

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Watch for next schedule starting in September




Friends of Mono Pond State Park – Who, What, and Why Now?

Over the past few years, the State of Connecticut, with the help of the Town of Columbia Open Space Committee, Board of Selectmen, and the Trust for Public Land, has acquired several large parcels of land. These acquisitions have expanded the Mono Pond State Park from its pre-existing 200 acres to well over 600 acres, extending from the boat launch area off of Hunt Road all the way south to the Airline Trail in Lebanon, and westward to the town-owned Mint Brook Preserve in Wells Woods, near Hebron. The property provides opportunities for hiking, biking, running, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing, skating, bow hunting, fishing, kayaking, and bird watching! The property is also steeped in history, with foundations in the Mint Brook parcel dating back to the 18th century. What a phenomenal recreational resource this establishes in our town!

However, with public ownership comes responsibility. As residents of the Town of Columbia and State of Connecticut, we all are responsible for this property, to ensure that these woodlands and waterways are preserved in their natural state, and the quality and integrity of the habitat is preserved so its native flora and fauna will continue to flourish. The CT DEEP and Town of Columbia, with input from other stakeholders, are currently revising the original 1999 Stewardship Agreement and Management Plan with the goal that the Plan will enhance and support education, recreation and conservation activities within Mono Pond State Park while preserving the integrity of Mono Pond State Park's natural resources and historical artifacts.

Enter, FRIENDS OF MONO POND STATE PARK! The Friends of Mono Pond State Park (FOMPSP) is a Columbia CT based “not for profit” 501(c)(3) organization formed in 2022. As a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, we can accept tax deductible donations that will be used to improve the quality and sustainability of Mono Pond State Park. Furthermore, it provides to anyone who shares this vision opportunities to participate actively in activities that further this cause.

The Friends of Mono Pond State Park's board includes several of your friends and neighbors, many of whom are serving or have served on town boards, committees and commissions: Tom McGrath, President; Rob Hellstrom,

Vice President; Todd Shepard, Secretary; Ron Wikholm, Treasurer; Ann Dunnack, Director; Paul Kordonowy, Director; Linda Rainwater, Director.

Our newly-formed Friends group is very much a work in progress. The revised Stewardship Agreement and Management Plan will help FOMPSP formulate our own goals, objectives and potential projects. Will we develop new trails? Maintain existing ones? Eradicate invasive species of plants, or work to restore degraded historic sites?

Will we set up nest boxes, build viewing platforms, or set up quiet places to sit and read or reflect? Should we



Photo of Mono Pond by Paul Ramsey

make ourselves available for guided hikes, or work with local area schools to conduct educational programs or install informational kiosks? Will we organize fundraisers for the projects of our dreams? Ideas, anyone?

Stay tuned for our Face Book page, and an up-and-running Website that will allow you to become members, sponsors, volunteers, and participants in the work we do and the events we hold in our park. (Any tech- and social media-savvy volunteers out there? We need YOU, ASAP! Please contact us at: friendsofmonopond@gmail.com)

Thanks, in advance, for your interest. We truly look forward to your ideas, energy, and involvement.

See you on the trails!

Friends of Mono Pond State Park

*Thank-you, Mr. David Black,
for Tressilian Tucker's
Wood Carving*

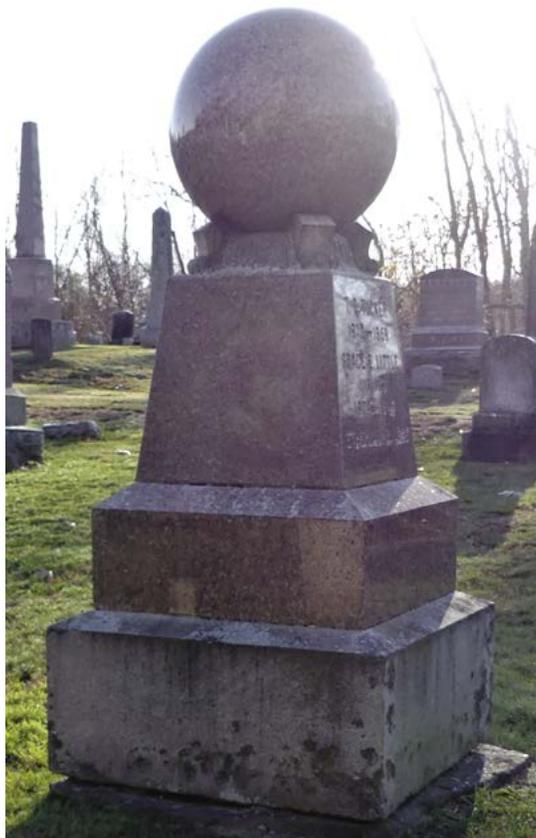
Tressilian Greene Tucker, born August 19, 1872 in Prudence, Rhode Island, son of Joel and Ruth Greene Tucker, grew up in Columbia on a farm owned by his parents near the corner of Route 66 and Hennequin Road. In an era when burgeoning electric power was being harnessed by steam powered turbines and diesel engines, farming had little interest to this young man. Hard to imagine today, but continuous, controllable, on/off electric power opened up a new world for applications such as automotive personal transportation, electric lighting, as well as electrifying all manner of small mechanical devices to do all kinds of work more consistently, efficiently, and easily.

Experimentation and engineering prowess was his passion and extraordinary gift. A quiet, unobtrusive gentleman "of the old school" according to his 1958 obituary, Tressilian Tucker was locally known as Tinker Tucker and professionally known as T. G. Tucker. He was, by all accounts, a mechanical and automotive genius. He was known nationally throughout engineering circles, and sought by the University of California and Amherst College to solve intransigent mechanical and electrical engineering problems.

Columbia knew him by outward appearances, mostly thanks to newspaper articles by



Above: Tucker's wood carving Sphere in a Cage (c.1950). Below: Tucker monument in Columbia Center Cemetery Burying Ground. Photos courtesy of Ingrid Wood.



Columbia journalist Eleanor Tuttle ... of having owned the first high-wheeled bicycle as a young boy, and later the first motorcycle, and first car in town; and having built a power mower from spare tractor parts. He built his own camera, made photosensitive paper, and developed his own photographs. For 38 years he maintained a machine and automotive repair shop near 193 Route 66 where he repaired cars and all manner of devices. He installed electrical power in his home which he shared with his wife Grace Elizabeth Little Tucker (1874 - 1949) and daughter Madeline Grace Tucker (1898 - 1951); and in his immaculate machine shop before anyone else had electricity in town. At one point he also installed electric lights on Columbia's green.

After 1951 Tressilian Tucker's eyesight began to fail, and he moved to the home of Ethel and Frank Black on Rt. 6 near Whitney Road. There he enjoyed the care of a loving family and companionship of son David, to whom Tressilian Tucker presented his remarkable wood carving. In February 1958 Tressilian Tucker passed away. He and his family are buried in Columbia Center Cemetery Burying Ground, curiously marked by a large polished granite sphere, and initials T.G.T.

Mr. David Black, now living in California, felt it was the right time to send back home Tressilian Tucker's wood carving, *Sphere in a Cage*, carved from a single block of wood. Thank-you so much for this ever-meaningful and important gift of Columbia's history!

Ingrid Wood, *Town Historian*

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