From the Desk of the First Selectwoman
by First Selectwoman Sandra Allyn Gauthier

In the spring, we were hopeful that the summer along with the hotter weather would curtail and provide us with a much needed reprieve from the Coronavirus. Unfortunately, this hasn’t been the case and the State continues to balance the phases of reopening with economic prosperity and the safety and health of residents. This is difficult and as we have seen across our Nation that reopening too quickly jeopardizes all of the initial Stay at Home safety measures.

As I write this, we have had 17 cases in Preston to date and we need to remain vigilant and disciplined by adhering to all precautionary protocols for the well-being of all us. In partnership with United Community Family Services, the Senior Center held its first Drive-up COVID 19 Testing and mask distribution on July 16th as well as continuing to offer its food pantry services. I would like to thank them both for bringing this to Preston and I anticipate future dates in August.

At this time, the Town Hall continues to operate and has been successful in servicing our community by phone, electronically, lockbox and curbside delivery. As always, you are encouraged to contact the appropriate person or department for any questions or concerns in order to meet your needs and specific situation.

The budget was passed in June and I would like to thank the BOF and all involved in the budgetary process in this unprecedented environment. Also, I would like to remind taxpayers that the Tax Deferral Program is in effect and you can contact Jill Keith or the Tax Collector Office at 860-887-5581 ext. 111 with any questions.

We have made progress and continue to work on positive efforts and achievements in several key areas: Financial Software Conversion, Public Works, and Sustainable CT.

• The Financial Software has been implemented which provided us the opportunity to use the State Office of Policy Management’s Uniform Chart of Accounts. This conversion and training was completed almost entirely virtually due to COVID 19 which was quite intensive. We have had our first live payroll and accounts payable processing on the new system and will continue to run the prior and new systems in parallel until the prior fiscal year is closed out.

• In the area of Public Works, we continue to evaluate road paving methods and the benefit of a road management program. In addition, SCRRRA has negotiated favorable terms in waste management resulting in the approval of an addendum and a change in solid waste ordinances. The Fuel Tank project is nearing completion as well.

• Sustainable CT is a municipal certification program which is a voluntary, comprehensive, action-oriented program and I am very excited that the BOS adopted a resolution to participate in Sustainable CT. The goals are many with a focus on ten broad categories but of utmost importance is to be forward looking, collaborative, and inclusive to engage our community to be the best Preston can be and to have a thriving local economy. More to come on this!

We continually update our Town Website and Town Facebook page and I hope you find these resources helpful. Also, our TOWN OF PRESTON ALERT PROGRAM is a community notification system that delivers information directly from Town Officials to you- please register or update your profile on our website today!

As always, feel free to share your ideas, suggestions and concerns by joining us at our BOS meetings or calling me at 860-887-5581 ext. 105. I look forward to hearing from you! Please stay safe.
You want to lower your mortgage rate.

Shouldn’t your bank make it easy?

Tired of paying the same old mortgage — the one that still carries a long term and the same high monthly payment?

Here’s a smart and easy solution that may be able to help you reduce your term and your monthly payment — the EasyPay Refinance Mortgage from Jewett City Savings Bank.

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The Preston Learning Community has gone through much in these last few months. **We want you to be aware; we know you are out there.** We know that you hear national and state dialogue along with local debate. We know that you may have experienced a job disruption or a work reassignment. We know that many of you worked hard to support our children while you were also trying to work virtually at home. We know that, at the very least, your familiar routines have been disturbed. We understand that some of you may have had someone close to you be affected by the COVID-19 virus. We hope that everyone you know and love is safe and feeling well.

The message below is an attempt to share what we know about plans for our schools and remind everyone **we continue to emphasize that this is a fluid and dynamic circumstance, plans may change.** Thank you again for all of your effort and support as we work through these challenging times.

The school district submitted a Reopen School plan to the Connecticut Department of Education on Friday, July 24, 2020 in response to Commissioner Miguel Cardona’s *Adapt, Advance, Achieve Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow: Together* guidance. Our priorities are: (1) Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff; (2) Allowing ALL students the opportunity to return to school FULL time starting August 31, 2020; (3) Monitoring the school, student, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to contain COVID-19 spread appropriately; (4) Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities; (5) Fostering strong two-way communication with families, educators, and staff; and (6) Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social-emotional wellbeing, and the mental health needs of our students.

In Preston, our number one priority is safety and wellbeing and the meaningful, trusting relationship between the teacher and the student. Mental health and wellbeing is at least as high a priority as physical health because they go hand in hand.

We sincerely thank all the students and families of Preston for their resilience, their involvement, and their heartfelt, continued support. Keep on talking and sharing your views with us. We are creating a plan that will be **Evergreen** – continuously updated to reflect the fluid and dynamic circumstances in which we find ourselves. We have agreed to align our work with other school districts in the LEARN Regional Collaborative, which includes 21 surrounding communities to reduce conflicting messages. Our local health authority reviewed our plan. So too did the First Selectwomen, Sandra Allyn-Gauthier.

We also recognize that there is much misinformation in the broader media, so all of our health information will be vetted directly from our local Health Department contact.

The district has several teams in place that have developed a response to the state guidelines, including a Reopening Team, a Social-Emotional Learning Team, a Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Team, a district leadership team, a district safety team, and of course, the Board of Education.

**Preston will offer three safety options for instruction, and we will be prepared to pivot based on health care priorities:**

- **Full Face-to-Face** schooling with social distancing and cleaning priorities in place.
- **Hybrid Model** which will combine face-to-face with virtual instruction in a reduced student number format. All of the LEARN Collaborative members will follow a similar hybrid model.
- **Full Virtual Instruction**, which will include improved instructional designs and student engagement strategies.

We are developing a response for students who chose not to participate in the district learning plan. More details to follow.

We will use the information gathered from parent, staff, and student surveys, as well as the independent input shared by parents, staff, and community members along with future engagement strategies to help frame our response to the state guidelines and local priorities. We will continue to increase the communication process to share thoughts, insights, concerns, and solutions.

**Our focus remains a safe and healthy return to school full time for students and staff starting with a half-day on Monday, August 31, 2020.**

Please monitor Facebook, email, text, and our webpage for further updates. Please contact the Superintendent’s office or your building principals with any questions or concerns.

Be safe, be healthy, and remain engaged! Thank you.
Norwich Free Academy senior, Kali Grace Whitford, has been selected as this year’s recipient of the Cynthia A. Carano Memorial Scholarship award. Kali received $1,300 to be used toward her tuition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Her essay titled, “How an Educator or Mentor has Positively Impacted My Life,” written about her Business Explorations teacher, Mrs. Linda Farinha, was chosen from seven other applicants. “Her essay truly portrayed what the committee was looking for and honored Ms. Carano’s legacy,” said Gale Ennis, Chairperson of the scholarship committee.

This year’s applicants were part of the first grade class at Preston Veterans Memorial School when Ms. Carano passed away unexpectedly. Our local community bank, Jewett City Savings Bank, graciously donated $1,750 and Cynthia’s mother, Julia Carano, matched the donation giving each of the other seven students a surprise gift of $500 to be used towards college expenses.

The award was established in 2009 after the unexpected passing of beloved Preston teacher Cynthia Carano, an educator in the town for over 20 years.

The award is given annually to a Preston graduating high school senior continuing on to a 2 or 4 year accredited institution. Since its inception, the scholarship committee has awarded over $12,000 to Preston students.
As the citizens of Preston are aware, the remediation clean up we’ve described in previous articles is currently on hold. Working with our contractors, we have determined that additional funds are needed to complete the clean-up to a residential standard requested by the Tribe. The major contaminant requiring remediation is ash/cinder materials from the former coal power plants that are now under roads, sidewalks, parking lots, grassy areas adjacent to the roads, and utility trenches.

We reported in the last Pipeline II that the CT General Assembly had approved a bond package in mid-March of this year that included our request for $7 million to finish the clean up at the site. Governor Lamont signed the bond package on March 13th. On Tuesday, July 21st the State Bond Commission approved our $7 million grant. This, coupled with our previously approved forgiveable $2 million Contingency Loan, provides the monies needed to convey the property to the Mohegan Tribe. We have begun working with CT-DECD (Department of Economic & Community Development) to finalize the Assistance Agreements which must be completed before we can re-start our efforts at the site. We will work closely with CT-DECD to finalize the agreements by late August; which would allow our work to begin again this fall.

Should you have any questions, suggestions or comments, please attend one of our virtual meetings on the second or fourth Wednesday of each month or contact me (Sean Nugent) at 860-917-6567 or Merrill Gerber at 860-887-7169.
As they have been all year, all Avalonia properties remain open. We request that you continue to observe the social distancing and masking practices you use elsewhere, and please protect all the wild animals living on these preserves by keeping any pets on a leash. We have the Preston Nature Preserve here in town, or you can go to Avalonia.org and look under “Our Preserves” to get maps of all our preserves and their trails. All of this is free, but we would ask you to consider a donation, or join the organization as a way of showing support. Joining is easily done online at Avalonia.org. Thanks for your help, and stay safe!!

OK, it’s deep summer now, and all our birds have had a busy spring: strengthening their mating pair-bonds (or finding a new mate), and getting ready to start families. Many species already have a nest full of hungry mouths to feed. But deep summer is just when Goldfinches are getting serious about starting their own families. In the winter, both sexes of Goldfinches have a muted, grey-green plumage color. Goldfinches have two molts, one in the spring, which is partial and spares the wing and tail feathers, and a full molt in the late fall. After the spring molt, the males stand out in their bright yellow (or ‘gold’) plumage with black wing-covers and a black cap, while the females remain in the much more muted grey-green. The bright yellow of the males makes them easy to spot at and around feeders, and easy to follow as the birds fly away from the feeder and alight in a distant tree or bush. Goldfinches have a shallow, swoopy, looping sort of flight pattern, not unlike that of many woodpeckers.

The goldfinch flights are almost always accompanied by a 3- or 4-syllabled flight call. The only time the female does not call in flight is when she’s nest-building or incubating a clutch of eggs. Like other small songbirds, goldfinches court and pair off in April and May, but unlike other songbirds they don’t actually nest until July. The flights of the males change during nest-building and breeding. The normally shallow wave-like sort of flight gives way, during nesting, to a much deeper, roller coaster-like flight path, or he flies in a flat, stalling sort of path, accompanied by an explosion of song. Once you see them, these flights will be your hallmark of the heat of real summer. The female does most of the nest building, and prefers thistle flowers and the webs of tent caterpillars as nesting material. The nests are often adjacent to or in large open areas, 4 to 20 feet off the ground. The clutch of 4-5 eggs is incubated mostly by the female for 12-14 days; after the eggs are laid, she spends 95% of her time on the eggs. The male feeds her continually during this incubation phase, returning to the nest from his foraging flights every hour or so. If she’s hungry, she will softly call from the nest, and the male will drop down and offer her some partially digested seeds, and then leave again.

During the first week after hatching, the chicks are quiet when the parents return to the nest, silently opening their mouths for food. In the second week, they become vocal when a parent returns to the nest. Both the male and the female are hard at it, finding food and bringing it back for the chicks. Once the young can fly, they start to feed themselves, but the Dad still helps feed them. They fly around as a family group, with Dad focusing on their fledgling call to find them in the undergrowth. The female has started on the second brood, and is fully occupied in incubating and then feeding this second family.

Most Goldfinches are year-round residents here, but there can be large movements of flocks of birds in the late Fall, though these finches are not considered migratory. They often feed in flocks at bird feeders in the fall and winter, preferring thistle seed and hulled sunflower seeds. If you leave your seed feeders up all year, with careful observation you may see the first wave of young birds visit your feeders in August or September. Then later on, you’ll notice the yellow plumage disappear in the fall, after the year’s second molt, when the males adopt the muted colors always worn by the female. Like all year-round residents in New England, goldfinches are really helped through the winter by a constant supply of food from human-supplied feeders, so please fill those feeders when the supply runs low.

*As always, thanks to Donald Stokes book “A guide to bird behavior” for the information in this piece.
We have been in business for over 15 years and we look forward to helping you with your heating and cooling needs!

Win a $25 Gift Certificate to Village Pizza!

How has Covid-19 affected your fall plans?

Email your answer to: tracylyndesigns@comcast.net
or mail to:
Tracy Lyn Designs, 211 Rte. 164 Preston, CT 06365

The “Upscale” Country Pizzeria & Grille

Open for Takeout!

Gourmet Pizza
Calzones!
Wraps! Wings!
Specialty Salads
Grinders
Pastrami!

Mama Mia!
It's Soooo Good!

Route 165 • Fleming’s Center
Preston CT (860) 887-1930
PRESTON COMMUNITY PARK
PLAYGROUND COMMUNITY BUILD

Saturday, September 12 & Sunday, September 13, 2020
8:00 am - 4:00 pm

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

We are gathering volunteers from the community to help us build our new playground. There will be work available for all skills and abilities!! We need 40-50 volunteers per day!! To volunteer, please contact Preston Parks & Recreation by phone at (860) 887-5581 x113, email recreation@preston-ct.org or register online at www.preston-ct.org to volunteer!!
I don’t know if there’ll be trick or treating this year... but soon to be published... a little bit of a spooky book on Amazon; *Who Could It Be?* For the little ones. Stay safe everybody!

In a little corner of South East Connecticut a small Episcopal church Re-Open with a loud BOOM! St. James Parish in Preston, sounded off a loud noise that could be heard throughout the region.

Brave members of this small community refused to cancel the 29th Annual Liz Harris Cannonball road race and created an Auto Parade to raise money for their cause. Over the past years, this road race team, with the help of nearly 1,000 volunteers, has raised over $186,000.00 to send “Kid’s to Camp”. So in 2020, the idea of an Auto Parade fit the pandemic restriction requirements very well. The Parade, which honored Father David L. Cannon co-founder, the Harris Family and Race Directors Tim and Kris-Anne Kane was made up of over 30 Preston Autos, Preston Fire Truck, Preston Ambulance and three State Trooper vehicles.

The Parade sent a loud voice through the community as cars with horns blaring and roadside spectators cheering proceeded to the old Preston school grounds to hear the traditional black powder cannon BOOM for the 29th time.

During these trying times of the pandemic, the planning team didn’t want to ask local businesses, either closed or struggling with COVID-19 shutdowns, for donations. This cheerful group of volunteers raised over $1,500.00 through private donations for their "Kid’s to Camp" program. KU-DOS to them ALL.

**Congratulations To Dylan McGuire for being the 73rd Eagle Scout from Preston Boy Scout Troop 75.**

Special Thank YOU to the EBOR Committee for serving during these times of COVID-19,

Ron Hathaway • Dwight Hopkins

Mark Wotring • Tara Hurt

**29th Annual Liz Harris Cannonball Road Race**

By

Phil Ludlow
About Downer Doane Park

During last year’s Heart of Preston City Event, many participants were unaware of the Downer Doane Park. So with the Walktober event coming up it seems like a good idea to share an article the originally appeared in the Sept. 1996 Preston Pipe Line.

In the past years, visitors to the May Day event at the park have remarked that, they did not know anything about the people from whom it was names. Here’s a little history in a nutshell for those who are interested.

Dr. Joshua Downer was born in Franklin on August 6, 1735. He came to Preston as a young man, and stayed for the rest of his life. During the Revolutionary War, he was one of the surgeons who cared for the wounded after the British attacked Fort Griswold in Groton. One story is told of how Dr. Downer was caring for the wounded after the massacre at the fort, when he came upon Lt. Parke Avery, seriously wounded by a bayonet to his head. “Parke,” the doctor said, “It is of no use to dress your wound— you must die.” “Doctor,” replied Avery, “Go forward and do your duty.” Although Downer heeded his wishes and tended to the other wounded, Avery survived to live another 40 years.

Few People realize that Preston was also the home of a celebrity of another kind. William H. Doane (1832-1915) was a gifted composer and writer of hymns. He attended The Preston City Baptist Church (now know as the Preston City Bible Church) and in 1866 he donated a cabinet organ and 50 song books to the Sunday School. Perhaps his best known songs were those he composed in collaboration with the famous blind hymn writer Fanny Crosby. Churchgoers anoung us should be able to find in a hymnal at least the best know of these, “Rescue the Perishing,” which has been a source of inspiration to many, in his day and since.

Walktober

The Preston Historical Society will be hosting the Heart of Preston City walking tour on Oct 4th at 1pm. It will start and end at the Preston City Bible Church on Route 164, Preston. Follow our Facebook page for futher details.

Long Society Meeting House

Even though we have not been able to fundraise, thanks to a grant from Chelsea Groton Foundation work on the interior has begun. Jay Rajewski will be installing pull down stairs to the attic, wooden pathways in the attic and repair/replacement to drywall on the lower section of the walls and ceiling. Replacement of the upper section will be delayed until funding can be procured. LSMH Chairman-Mark Christensen,

Digitizing Documents

Have you hit a road block in your family genealogy? Check out https://ctcollections.org/. You might be able to find just what you are looking for. Linda Christensen and her dedicated team of volunteers are adding new information all the time.

The work requires a computer (a scanner is optional), and an extra few hours a week of your time. You can work from home, too.

If you’d like to see what we’ve been doing, go to Please call Linda at 860-887-5828 or email LindaCh5@comcast.net.

Preston Historical Society Meetings for 2020

Wed. Aug. 5th @ 6:30pm at Long Society Meeting House
Sun. Oct. 4th@ 1pm at Long Society Meeting House Annual Meeting
Wed. Dec. 2nd @ 6:30pm at Preston Public Library
Cookie Swap

Preston Historical Society Contact Information
Bridget Park-President

Photo: Downer Doane Park-1968
Mike and Anna Riegel are the proprietors of Riegel Farm and Forge. We are very excited to bring life back to the iconic Parkhurst Farm Stand that has long been a well-known stop for Preston residents.

Anna is a 5th generation farmer of the Scott Farms found up and down Eastern and Central CT. Anna is thrilled to have the opportunity to farm in Preston and through her love of working the soil bring her produce to share with the community at the Farm Stand. Mike is the 3rd generation Riegel living in Preston with Anna and their four children. Mike is passionate about blacksmithing and welding and you can find his creative metal fabrications at the Stand.

We believe in being good stewards of the soil entrusted to us by using organic farming practices. All produce grown in our field is non-gmo and pesticide free and are plainly marked at the Farm Stand.

What You Can Find at the Stand:
Farm to table vegetables and herbs, in addition to seasonal fruit! Slicing and cherry tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, pepperoncini peppers, jalapeño peppers, habanero peppers, scorpion peppers, ghost peppers, carolina reapers, and handmade glass art by CT artist Tim LaChapelle.

We are located at Parkhurst Farm Stand on the corners of Route 165 and Miller Road. For GPS use the address 144 Route 165 Preston, CT. 06365.
Open Wednesday – Saturday, 10am-6pm.
Curbside pickup orders are available 7 days a week!
Please call cell 860-235-7998. You can find us on Facebook at: Riegel Farm Forge

We look forward to seeing you!
Mike and Anna Riegel

2020 PRESTON COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (CFECT) is pleased to announce that this summer, it will accept proposals for the Preston Community Fund, one of its 550 component funds. The Preston Community Fund will support the arts, cultural and social needs of the residents and organizations of the Town of Preston, Connecticut.

The Preston Community Fund was originally established in 1991 with funds given by the former American Ref-Fuel Company of Southeastern Connecticut, which then operated the Preston regional trash incinerator, to help support the varied nonprofit and civic organizations in town, under the guidance of an advisory committee of Preston residents. In 2015, the advisory committee voted to transfer the fund to the Community Foundation and retain its role as advisors to this permanently endowed fund, in making annual grants to benefit Preston residents.

The deadline for the submission of online proposals will be 5:00 pm on September 30, 2020.

Check back on the Community Foundation’s website for more details:
https://www.cfect.org/Nonprofits/Apply-for-a-Grant

Questions? Contact Alison Woods at alison@cfect.org

About the Community Foundation
Serving 42 towns and comprised of 550 charitable funds, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut puts philanthropy into action to address the needs, rights and interests of the region. The Foundation stewards net assets of more than $96 million and has awarded more than $66 million in grants and scholarships to nonprofits and students since its founding in 1983. To learn more, visit cfect.org.
Preston Public Library

389 Route 2 (Across from Town Hall) Preston, CT 06365 • Phone 860.886.1010
Find us online! www.prestonlibrary.org • Email us: library@prestonlibrary.org
Hours: Monday 9-3 • Tuesday-Thursday 9-8 • Friday 9-5 • Saturday 9-1

New Hours:
Mondays: Closed
Tuesdays: 10:00 am-4:00 pm
Wednesdays: 10:00 am-4:00 pm
Thursdays: 10:00 am-7:00 pm
Fridays: 10:00 am-4:00 pm
Saturdays: 10:00 am-2:00 pm
Sundays: Closed

Coronavirus Update:
The Preston Public Library is now open to the public by appointment only. Masks must be worn and no more than 5 patrons are allowed in the building at a time. Please call us at (860) 886-1010 to make an appointment.

We are still doing curbside pick-up: call us at (860) 886-1010 or email us your request at 389prestonreads@gmail.com

Staff will check your requested books out and leave them in our curbside pick-up box on the bench outside our door.

Free Book Giveaway!
Stop by the library and visit our story room for free books! Take as many as you want! Boxes, bags are available to help carry your free material!
No appointment needed but masks must be worn and social distancing rules must be followed.
Call the library at (860) 886-1010 for more information!

Our New Website:
https://prestonpublic.org
Check it out!

New Library Cards!
Our library has purchased updated library cards with key tables!
Schedule your appointment to get one!

Children’s Corner
Kids and Families!
New to Preston Public Library: Tumblebooks, TumbleMath, and Teen Book Cloud for great digital reading!

Going to our new website at https://prestonpublic.org

Coming Soon:
Awe Learning Stations — great learning tools for preschoolers and lower elementary students!

Library Board of Trustees: Katherine Allingham, Patricia Bell, Kelly Ennis-Davis, Ann Legler, Mary Jo Nugent
Email: prestonlibraryboard@gmail.com
The Library Board of Trustees is currently accepting applications for vacancies. Please use Board email for further information.
The Friends of The Preston Public Library

Dear “Friends of Preston Library” Members, Volunteers, Library Patrons and all Residents:

In light of the developments regarding COVID-19, our volunteer group would like to first say that our thoughts are with those affected by the virus. In keeping up with the guidance of CDC and state and local authorities related to limiting large gatherings, meetings, and travel precautions, all Friends of the Preston Library gathering events have been suspended at this time and we will continue to ensure that all measures are taken to create social distance to minimize the spread of COVID-19 when we resume our activities. We will continue to communicate with you as circumstances change.

If you haven’t already heard, our new Preston Public Library “BOOK GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM” (offered by The Friends of the Preston Public Library and the Preston Library Staff) has been set-up in Preston Library’s Community Meeting Room with a wide variety of books which is continually being replenished frequently from the library’s collection and previous donations. There are no limits on your selections and please feel free to stop in as often as you wish during regular library hours. In addition to books, there are also audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles available. Although this is a free offering to our patrons and visitors, monetary contributions are welcomed to further continue the library’s programs and services.

We must all rebuild our lives and our organizations, so while our Friends group is busy trying to think of new, creative ways to support our Preston library, please maintain your support for our Friends of the Preston Library group and your fellow Friends members. As we navigate through these challenging times, we’re reminded of how fortunate we are to be part of this strong community that supports each other to accomplish great things. It is the power of this Preston community that will propel us through this to better times.

On behalf of The Friends of the Preston Library, we wish you, your loved ones, and your friends health and safety.

The Friends of the Preston Public Library Officers:
Mary Jo Nugent, President
Vice President Officer: The VP position is currently “Vacant” & we invite you to share your interest with any of us
Linda Christensen, Secretary
Marie Perrin, Treasurer

Catch us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofPrestonPublicLibrary/

Please indicate membership level for 2020-2021 and enclose a check payable to “Friends of the Preston Public Library” in the amount shown.

[Mail to: Friends of the Preston Public Library, 389 Route 2, Preston, CT 06365 or pay at Library]

Name:_______________________________________________________________________
Address:_____________________________________________________________________
Phone:_________________________email:________________________________________

Indicate your membership level for 2018-2019 below:
Senior $5____ Individual $10____ Family $15____ Organization/Small Business $25____ Lifetime $100____

If you would like to lend your support, your donation is very welcome. Donation:________
I am willing to help with: _____Book Sales _____Special events _____Library Volunteer

The Friends of the Preston Public Library is a registered 501C(3) organization
and all contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.
The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly interrupted our normal routines, and effectively ended the regular legislative session in March, almost two months early. It continues today to impact the process of crafting, debating and passing legislation. However, impact doesn’t mean to stop completely. The legislature recently met in special session to tackle four important pieces of legislation regarding police accountability, expanded access to telemedicine and absentee ballots, and price caps on the cost of insulin and associated equipment.

These issues, especially the police accountability bill, have been written about quite a bit in recent weeks, but I’d like to dig a bit deeper into the absentee ballot measure as I feel it’s important to understand with the upcoming November election. In addition, for those of you voting via absentee ballot for the first time, please ensure you follow the directions provided when returning your ballot so your vote is counted.

HB 6002, An Act Concerning Absentee Voting and Reporting of Results at the 2020 State Election and Election Day Registration, makes various changes affecting absentee voting, canvassing and reporting election returns, and Election Day Registration (EDR).

This legislation allows eligible electors to vote by absentee ballot due to the sickness of COVID-19, gives the secretary of the state authority to change absentee voting forms and materials to conform to the expanded authorization, requires the secretary of the state to select a third-party mail vendor for optional use by town clerks in mailing absentee voting sets, authorizes absentee voters to return absentee ballots to drop boxes, authorizes the secretary of the state to waive mandatory supervised absentee voting requirements, and extends certain deadlines and timeframes associated with processing absentee ballots and canvassing and reporting election returns.

As the Ranking Member of the Government, Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee, I worked closely with Rep. Dan Fox (GAE Committee House Chair) in the weeks leading up to special session to provide absentee ballot access for the November election due to the sickness of COVID-19, incorporating as many provisions as possible to maintain the integrity of the election.

Making these significant changes to our voting process in Connecticut balanced two competing principles: the right to vote and integrity of elections. While there are still concerns about election integrity with the increased use of absentee ballots by mail, we have legal remedies for this should they occur. However, without allowing greater access to absentee ballots for the November election for the sickness of COVID-19, there is absolutely no remedy for someone who does not feel safe voting in person and would therefore have to forego their constitutional right to vote. Given the importance of voting, especially in a presidential election, providing access to an absentee ballot for the sickness of COVID-19 seemed reasonable but also limiting the solution to only the November 2020 election.

Knowing the pandemic will not continue forever, it’s important to make sure we have reasonable policies and procedures in place to help our economy recover, especially our small businesses that have been severely impacted by being shut down. We need to provide parameters for safely opening our small businesses and expect our residents to be responsible when interacting with others.

School districts across the state are creating plans and implementing policies and procedures to align with state guidance, and will provide as much protection as possible for our students. I fully expect more information from the governor will be forthcoming as we get nearer to a starting date for each district. The principle in opening our schools needs to be local Boards of Education being responsible for final decisions based on a risk-based assessment of conditions for safely reopening our schools.

In September, the Executive Orders Governor Lamont passed to flatten the curve and prevent the spread of this deadly virus will begin to lapse. However, that doesn’t mean we can flip the switch and magically return the state back to how it was before the pandemic. Rather, it puts the focus on you and me to do the right things for our family, friends and neighbors.

We have the power to determine where Connecticut goes from here.

State Rep. Mike France
News From The Preston City Congregational Church

Two Can Food Pantry

Thank you to the many people who have offered food and financial contributions to the food pantry.

Your generosity will go a long way toward helping others during this unfortunate time.

We appreciate your kindness, and so do those on the receiving end.

(The Toucan Food Pantry Crew)

Four Preston Eagle Scouts, all members of NFA Graduating Class of 2020, recently where awarded an Eagle Scout Cord for “Distinction of Excellence” from the National Boy Scouts of America. All four will be continuing their education in the Fall. They have chosen fields of study in Nuclear Engineering, Engineering, Sports Management and Youth Development Education.

Good Luck in pursuit of your future goals. Continue to live up to the Scout Oath and Law to the best of your knowledge and never forget “Once an Eagle Scout always an Eagle Scout”.

Photo left to Right: 
Eagle Scout Dylan McGuire, 
Eagle Scout Digby Ludlow, 
Eagle Scout Conrad Waters and 
Eagle Scout Sean Hirt.

Preston City Congregational Church

Reverend Stanley E. White, Minister

Join us for Sunday worship: 9 & 10:30 A.M.

Call to reserve a seat (limited to 50)
Temperatures will be checked
Wearing a mask is a must!

The Toucan Food Pantry is open on an “as needed” basis.
Please call the office to arrange a day and time for pick-up.

We are grateful to the community for their donations of food during this unprecedented time. Your support helps to support others -- in Preston and beyond. Thank you!

For more information, check out our website: prestoncitycongregational.org • Check us out on FACEBOOK!

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