



On Dec. 22, Board of Selectmen Chairman Kristin Hutchins presented LaVerne Redlon with the Boston Post Cane, an honor presented to the town's oldest resident. Redlon is set to turn 100 years old later this month. PHOTO COURTESY OF SWH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Boston Cane goes to soon-to-be centenarian

By Sarah Hinckley

SOUTHWEST HARBOR— LaVerne Redlon is set to turn 100 this month and the town has presented her with the Boston Post Cane as an early present. Board of Selectmen Chairman Kristin Hutchins presented Redlon with the cane on Dec. 22 at her home just off Main Street where she lives with her daughter, Jeanne Boyd.

In 1909, over 700 Boston Post Canes were given to New England towns as a publicity stunt by the Boston Post Newspaper. At that time, only men were presented with the canes because they were the only ones considered citizens. Even though women were given the right to vote in 1920, Southwest Harbor did not present the cane to a woman until 1958. Redlon joins at least 10 other centenarians

on the list of recipients for the town, the most recent of whom was Mary Orcutt Harkins.

Thirty years ago, Redlon bought her house in Southwest Harbor, making the move to live here permanently with her second husband five years later after she retired. He died a couple of years after the move, according to Boyd.

If one were to ask Redlon the key to a long life, she cites it often, according to her daughter; eat healthy, don't smoke and don't drink (alcohol).

Born and raised in Illinois, Redlon was one of three children. As a young woman, she made her way to Philadelphia and joined the Navy for three years.

During that time, she served as a storekeeper. Eventually, Redlon moved to Massachusetts and worked on a flower farm and for the postal service. When she retired, Redlon was the postmaster at a post office in Duxbury, Mass. From there, she made her way north to the coast of Maine.

Although she has been homebound throughout the pandemic, Redlon does get out at least a dozen times throughout the year.

"I do take her out once a month to get her hair done," said Boyd. "She used to like to go to Seawall and just sit and watch the water."

Since being in Southwest Harbor, Redlon has been a member of the town's Conservation Committee and a volunteer at the Charlotte Rhoades Park and Butterfly Garden and the Southwest Harbor Public Library. For the library, Redlon helped with their occasional fund drives and sent personal thank you notes to all who donated.

After retiring, Redlon did a fair share of international travel, according to Boyd. She has gone on an African safari, taken an art class in France and visited Russia twice, at least once as an exchange through the Surry Opera Company. When it was safe to do so, Redlon went out regularly with the walking group Footloose Friends that meets on Tuesdays. She walked throughout the year on different trails around the area, with a smaller group in the winter that grew to larger numbers in the summer with seasonal participants.

Another important local group Redlon was a part of was the Call Girls. Made up of older, single women, members of the group would make phone calls daily to check in on each other.

"In the morning, they would go down the list and make sure everyone was OK," said Boyd. She explained that if the recipient didn't answer, the caller would go in person to check on them. "Most of her friends have passed away. But she had a good time when they were here."



LaVerne Redlon poses with her Boston Cane presented to her on Dec. 22.
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