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New Durham resident presented Boston Post Cane

NEW DURHAM — After three years with the same recipient, the town's Boston Post Cane found a new home in the hands of 94-year-old Everett Rogers Sunday.

"Last year's recipient moved out of town, so don't worry folks," Selectman Ron Gehl said before presenting Rogers with the cane on Sunday afternoon, which goes to the "most experienced individual in the town," as Gehl put it.

Rogers replaces three-time recipient Don Blackden. The cane was presented to Rogers during the New Durham Fire Company's annual Senior Holiday Dinner at the New Durham Elementary School.

Rogers said he was happy to receive the prestigious cane but a little surprised.

"I can't believe there is no one here older than me," he said.

He has lived in New Durham for 57 years and has spent most of his life in the Lakes Region. He worked 50 years delivering building materials for Diprizio Lumber in Middleton.

"I like New Durham," he said. "It's a great town."

Rogers has been married to his wife, Margaret, for 53 years and has two sons, a daughter and 14 grandchildren.

David Rogers, Rogers' youngest son, said getting the cane shows his father is living a good life.

"He's doing well," David said. "He uses a walker, but he gets around well and is still very active."

Rogers' time with the cane was actually short lived — he only got to hold it for a few minutes before it was returned to the town vault. He did, however, get to take home a commemorative plaque.

"There are very few communities that have their original post cane," town historian Cathy Orlowicz said. "Ours is an original."

Around 1909, the Boston Post distributed more than 700 canes to honor the oldest resident in communities across New England. The newspaper went out of business in 1957.

Beyond celebrating Rogers' "experience," Sunday was another chapter in the town's tradition of

serving a free meal to residents age 60 or older.

Former Selectmen Dean Stimpson said the tradition started in the early 1970s when he owned the Foxy Johnny Restaurant and had the idea of hosting a dinner for the town's older residents. The town's population was about 500 people back then.

"We had maybe 10-15 people show up that first year," he said.

In the mid 1970s the town took it over, and then the New Durham Fire Company took over in the 1980s. About 100 people usually attend annually.

"It's just plain popular," he said. "It's a chance for some of these older people to get together once a year and chat."

Volunteer Donna Swett said the event is a true volunteer effort and a good way to give back to the community's senior citizens.
