RIVEREAST =

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 45, Number 44

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen



Taking a Costumed Plunge... David Lewis (left) and David Joslin (right) came in costume for the annual Turkey Plunge in East Hampton. The event raised over \$16,000 for East Hampton Food Bank.

Criticism After Repeal Of Racism Proclamation

Andreas Bisbikos was sworn in as Colchester first selectman on Monday, and immediately followed up on a campaign promise - but in the

process stirred a controversy in town.

Bisbikos on Monday repealed a proclamation issued in July 2020 by his predecessor, Mary Bylone, declaring racism to be a "public health crisis" in town. Twenty other Connecti-cut municipalities – including New London and Glastonbury - have also made such proclama-

When issuing the proclamation last year, By-lone stated that "declaring racism to be a public health crisis or emergency offers a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities."

She added, "What we are trying to say with

the proclamation is that we acknowledge that racism plays a part in access to health and other pieces like education and things that help us to be healthier people."

Nevertheless, many in town objected to the proclamation, with then-selectman Taras Rudko telling Bylone last July that "you're calling our town racist and I take offense to that."

During Bisbikos' campaign this summer, he vowed multiple times to do away with the proclamation, so Monday's repeal was not entirely unexpected. But the fact that he did it unilaterally and on his very first day in office was not well received in Democratic circles.

"People have reached out to me. They are up-set about it," Bylone said this week. "I never said Colchester was racist. I said racism causes problems getting health care. There is racism and prejudice. We were trying to raise awareness that some people don't have access to

health care because of it.'

Bylone had a career in the health care field as a nurse and administrator.

"People are denied services that are physical, mental and spiritual," she said. "Then there's the impact of COVID. People need equal ac-

Selectman Denise Turner, a lifelong Colchester resident and the only Black member of the board, was also disappointed with Bisbikos

"I think he was a little hasty," she said. "He decided to do it without consulting me. I'm the only person of color in the administration. It would have been nice to talk about it.'

Turner also thinks repealing the proclamation was bad for the town as well.

"This is divisive for us," she said. "You have to have a discussion with the people it affects. When a bunch of white people say 'racism does

not exist' you're not getting the true facts."

Turner said she experienced racism in the local schools when she was a child.

"In sixth grade, a boy called me the 'n' word," she said. "I complained to the teacher. Then the boy denied it. The teacher didn't do anything."

Turner also recalled that "another teacher

said Black people have smaller brains. Black children never got good grades in that class."

Turner said the recent examples of racism

she has seen in town were more subtle, such as people slamming a door in her face as she follows them into a building. She also recalled while standing in line, a white man in front of her moved his cell phone out of his back pocket,

See Criticism After Repeal, page 2

Hebron Gets First Female Eagle Scout

by Sloan Brewster

When growing up, Brynn Maleryn knew she wanted to be "the first female something" – and that "something" wound up being the first female Eagle Scout in Hebron.

The 16-year-old junior at RHAM High School said she was never exactly sure how she would break bounds for women, especially since "we're everywhere now."

But in 2018, the Boy Scouts of America opened to its organization girls and renamed

Shortly thereafter, in 2019, Brynn and two friends – Rachel Fournier, 15, and Linnea Carlson, 16 – founded BSA Troop 1028, the first female BSA troop in the town.

Since then, she has completed an Eagle Scout project and done a lot of other steps along the

Brynn said while she had been a Girl Scout,

the troop was starting to fall apart and the program wasn't really for her. BSA, which her brothers were in, resonates more with her personality, she said.

"It's a lot more outdoorsy," she said. "I really like that – camping and stuff."

She said she also enjoy when the boys' troop, Troop 28, and the girls' troop get together and go on trips and such.

Before Brynn could join the ranks of the 1,000 female Eagle Scouts that have been recognized in the country since 2018, she had to go through the ranks, Sam Izzarelli, Eagle Scout coordinator, said. That meant becoming a Tenderfoot Second Class and Tenderfoot first class and honing "skills that develop background," such as camping, cooking, navigating, citizenship, fitness and first aid, he said.

From there, Brynn had to be ranked a Star

and then a Life Scout, he said. To do that, she had to complete service requirements and re-ceive 21 merit badges, 13 of which were spe-cifically required while the others could be of

"Brynn was very creative in being able to go out and find merit badge opportunities, espe-cially during COVID," Izzarelli said.

For her Eagle project, Brynn decided to build a stone fire pit and stage at St. Peter's Preserve a 22-acre property behind AHM Youth and Family Services on Pendleton Drive.

She completed the build on Saturday Oct. 2 the last major step on her path to becoming the first female Eagle Scout in Hebron.

The final, though smaller, step before Brynn is officially named an Eagle Scout is a board of review, which, according to Izzarelli, is pend-See First Female Eagle Scout, page 3 Inside...

Marlborough Wrestler Wins Pair of Medals ... pg 6

East Hampton

Library Head Moving Onpg 11

Colchester

Beloved Deacon Remembered ... pg 14

New Senior Center Approved......pg 16

Andover

Veterans Day Ceremony Held ...pg 26 Regional

Obituaries . .pg 28-29



What should you look for in your loved ones this holiday season?

- Is their home environment well-maintained?
- Do you see any unopened mail or unpaid bills?
- ***** How is their balance and mobility?
- oyou notice any weight loss?
- ***** Are they experiencing loneliness?
- on they taking their medications?

If you notice these changes let Colebrook Village at Hebron be your solution! We provide Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care.

LARGER APARTMENTS BETTER AMENITIES GREATER VALUE

55 John E Horton Blvd Hebron, Connecticut 06248

860-801-1114 colebrookvillage.com Colebrook Village at Hebron

An Everbrook Senior Living Community

Cover Story • Co

★ First Female Eagle Scout cont. from page 1

Brynn said she and her troop went to the preserve for a meeting at the old fire pit, which was actually a circle of small fire pits with a larger one in the center. She noticed it was not as safe as it could be and could use some work, she said.

A stage near the fire pit consisted of a pile of cinderblocks and was also unsafe, Izzarelli said. Thinking it might be a good Eagle project,

Brynn got contact info for the church from one of the troop leaders and reached out to the church to get the go-ahead to do the project.

A friend of the leader, who chooses to re-

main anonymous, donated masonry materials, including stones and concrete.

Throughout the project, Brynn acted as project manager, Izzarelli said. She met with scout leaders, church leadership, raised funds for materials that were not included with the masonry donations, designed the fire pit and stage, solicited volunteers to do the construction and oversaw the work.

Jessica Maleryn, Brynn's mother and Scout

master, said Brynn's "natural leadership quali-ties" came into play on the project.

"She learned actually in real time you can't focus in at one time on one small aspect of your project," Jessica said. "You've got to go from piece to piece and keep giving direction."

The proud mother said Brynn made sure everything went smoothly on the site and that everyone got breaks when needed. She even jumped in to take over for the lead mason when it was time to give him a break and did the same for other volunteers as well.

"That's leadership, right?" Jessica said. "You give direction, you thank people, you motivate people and at the end of the day, if something isn't getting done, you've got to role your sleeves up and get it done. That's what Eagle projects are about.

Jessica, who said she "stayed more than an arms' length away" to give Brynn space, said Eagle projects offer good leadership experience and while there are adults on site, they can offer

advice but must take a back seat, allowing the scouts to do the work and make the decisions.

Brynn also learned more about masonry than she ever expected to, her mom said. She sat down with her father, Steven Maleryn, and made measurements to determine the size of stones to be cut, "which was tricky."

Brynn said her father then cut the stones to

Brynn's brother Rvan Maleryn, 19, who is also an Eagle Scout, said his sister's project was more complicated than his and that she put a lot

Brynn's brother, Shaughn Maleryn, 21, is also an Eagle Scout, Jessica said. He revitalized Burrows Hill Cemetery and found a gravestone that folks had not known was there.

The Rev. Ron Kolanowski, pastor as St. Peter's Episcopal Church, said his daughter's Girl Scout troop, which is based in Storrs, used the fire pit area Sunday.

'It's vastly improved," he said.

The Scouts learned how to light a fire, made hotdogs, s'mores and apple grilled cheese sandwiches and then went hiking, he said.

Kolanowski said the preserve and fire pit area is used by the community and that local Scouts help maintain it. During the Maple Fest, some-time the trees on the preserve are tapped and the sap is boiled down to syrup at the fire pit to show child how it's done.

He said the church continues to seek out or ganizations who want to use the property.

Brynn said her troop has also used the fire pit. She said the girls sat around a fire there the first week of November.

Brynn said being the first female Eagle Scout in Hebron was "a big deal" and that she was excited about her accomplishment.

Jessica said Brynn was driven and has "alrays done what she wants to do, regardless of what society said she can do.'

"She's the type of person that says I want to do this and this is what's going to happen," she

Izzarelli said Brynn's project was well-



Brynn Maleryn is the very first female Eagle Scout in Hebron. Her Eagle project was to build a stone fire pit and stage at St. Peter's Preserve, a 22-acre property behind AHM Youth and Family Services on Pendleton Drive.

planned and nicely done.

"She did a fantastic job, she is very laser focused," he said. "She's going to do great things and one of them is becoming our first female Eagle Scout in Hebron.'

Izzarelli said Troop 1028 was "a really ener-

getic group of young ladies" and that the "door is open" to new members.

"If you enjoy the outdoors, learning skills this is a great place to do that," he said. "Scouts, it is different than most youth programs as they develop skills."





