

50 YEARS AGO

MARCH 1959

Here's some old news from the Andover, East Andover, West Andover, Potter Place, and Cilleyville "gossip" columns of the Franklin Journal Transcript, selected by Heather Makechnie.

March 12, 1959

[National attention was drawn to this incident, bringing literally thousands of letters to the Wilmot post office.]

War of the Sexes:

Wilmot Elects Woman Select(man)

The little upland farming-lumbering-mining town of Wilmot (500 souls strong if you stretch the count a bit) is wracked by trouble today; trouble of a kind that shouldn't afflict a bigger, stronger place much better able to meet it. The trouble, reduced to its simplest terms, you might say, (especially if you are a man) is women.

But if you said it, might be you'd be wrong, for there are those in Wilmot who say that the seat of the difficulty is – men. (And somehow there are women among those that hold that view.)

Anyway, what's happened is that on Tuesday night, Wilmot up and elected a woman as Selectman at Town Meeting – and neither in the Holy Writ, nor the State's Constitution will you find reference to a Selectwoman. It's Selectmen all the way.

And on Wednesday night – on the walk outside the home of Town Clerk Edith M. G. Campbell – where she had just administered the oath of office – the two men on the board of selectmen gave the new female selectmen their resignations effective immediately.

The new woman selectman – and now the sole selectman in Wilmot – is Donna Niles, former major in the WACs and one of the founders and operators of the successful and somewhat famous Freedom Acres Farm on the lower slopes of Mount Kearsarge.

The resigned selectmen are Ernest M. Patten and Wayne B. Atwood. Said Patten, "I told her I had nothing against her, nor against women, but I just was not going to work with a woman." Said Atwood, "It's just a matter of sex; woman in politics, in this job. I don't think in

this small town, under the circumstances, a woman should be on the board."

March 12, 1959

Proposals for a cooperative school district, embracing Andover, were passed over at the annual town meeting here after Sunapee decided to go ahead on its own and dropped out of the plan.

March 12, 1959

The Town meeting at Andover was treated to an unusual spectacle; an exempt taxpayer asking to be allowed to carry a share of the tax load. Headmaster Lyle Farrell contacted the selectmen regarding change in the method of assessing taxes against Proctor Academy.

Under new laws governing exemptions to educational institutions, Proctor is required to pay almost no tax on its properties. Mr. Farrell and his Board of Trustees feel that they would much prefer that the school make a little more substantial contribution to the town in which it is located than the present token.

They have suggested that Proctor be assessed a per capita tax on its student enrollment, which would amount to something over \$300 annually. The Town Meeting accepted the offer with appreciation.

March 19, 1959

A&P, Martin's Food Fair, and Surowiec's Market in Franklin are offering Easter ham (shank portion) for 39 cents a pound. Pinkham's Market boasts that its prices are competitive with the lowest in town, but First National Store is charging 43 cents a pound.

THE 15TH!!!!
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Andover Historical Society

By Joanna Sumner
 Andover Historical Society

I erroneously printed in the Andover Historical Society Newsletter that we had decided that it was necessary to cancel the Old Time Fair this summer because of construction on the Route 11 overpass in Potter Place. However, plans to have the fair are still in the works. Please continue to keep us in mind for your auction and flea market contributions.

We want to thank RP Johnson and Country Pine Furniture for their donations to our raffle this year. It is so nice that they were willing to support us even during a very slow economy. RP's has donated a gift certificate for a free day of rental equipment, and Country Pine has donated a ski rack. Please stop by our table on voting day to buy your raffle ticket.

Through the generosity of New Hampshire Humanities Council's Humanities to Go program, we have been extraordinarily lucky to get Rebecca Rule for our speaker this spring. Rebecca tells and gathers stories in New England, especially New Hampshire. She is the author of several books and writes a book review column for three New Hampshire newspapers. She also hosts the New Hampshire Authors series on New Hampshire Public Television. Her presentation, *This Reminds Me of a Story*, is scheduled for June 8.



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