



Andris "Andy" Strazdins

January 22, 1950 - July 16, 2015

Andris "Andy" R. Strazdins, 65, of New Britain, passed away Thursday July 16, 2015 at the Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain. Born in Germany, Andy was a New Britain resident since 1951 and graduated from New Britain High School in 1968. He worked as a Revenue Examiner for the State of Connecticut Department of Labor for 33 years retiring in 2009. Andy was a deacon at West Woods Bible Chapel in Hamden and was formerly affiliated with the New Britain Boy Scouts where he was an Eagle Scout Recipient, was an Assistant Scout Master from 1968 thru 1973 and was Scout Master of Troop 17 at First Lutheran Church in New Britain from 1973 thru 1988. Andy was a US Army veteran serving in the National Guard and the US Army Reserve. Surviving is one brother, Edgars Strazdins of Rocky Hill. Funeral services will be held Friday 10 AM at First Lutheran Church, 77 Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051. Burial will follow in Fairview Cemetery, New Britain. Calling hours will be Thursday evening 6 to 8 PM at Carlson Funeral Home, 45 Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the West Woods Bible Church, 165 Hillfield Rd., Hamden, CT 06158. Please share a memory or note of sympathy by "clicking" SEND CONDOLENCES at the bottom of the page.

Tribute Wall

SD

“ Describing what it was like to know Andy on a single page is like taking a sip of water from a fire hydrant; it isn't easy but I'll do my best:

Knowing Andy can be likened to the "Wizard of Oz" movie. As it started out in black and white, Andy when you first met him was gentle and never overpowering. You might not even notice him in a room the first time you met him but after he became your friend, you couldn't help but notice him or for that matter, ever forget him.

Before long as with the movie, Andy's colors would shine. There was the color of Andy as a servant. Should I mention every person Andy helped and how often and willingly he would offer himself, I would crash this page. I remember one time telling Andy that my car had broken down. I hadn't planned how I would get to work the next day and upon arising the next morning, began to wonder how I would ever get there. A few minutes later Andy's car pulled into my driveway. I said to him that I didn't remember asking him to get me but with Andy, simply mentioning a need was all that was necessary.

Then there was the color of Andy as a patriot serving in the US Army. Andy faithfully served his country with no regrets retiring as a Major but like a US Marine was "Semper Fi" always faithful and never "left any of his friends behind".

Then there was the color of Andy's faith; never missing church and always bringing those who couldn't get there on their own. I never needed to call Andy to see if he would be at any of the Christian men's conferences and if we did in fact discuss it before the actual event, there was no need to discuss where we would meet. Andy would always find you and when he did, you had a friend for the day.

Then there was the color of Andy's spontaneity. Andy would often come to my office unannounced and spend a few minutes just to

visit. Busy or not, I would enjoy a brief conversation with him before returning to the task at hand.

I trusted Andy, I enjoyed Andy as a friend, and I loved Andy as a brother. While he is gone and I remain, I know that I will never meet another person like him. There can only be one Andy.

When he became ill I called him in what proved to be our last conversation. I asked him if he needed any help or someone to get his groceries but he said that he had people helping him around the clock. I told him that as he spent his life faithfully helping so many, God was honoring him for the many years he served others.

When Andy finally passed, as with the "Wizard of Oz" movie, things went back to black and white. The world just won't be the same without Andy. Yet I trust that one day in glory I will see Andy again in the living color of everything that he embodied. Until then, I will remember him and people like him who brightened the world for those around them, asked for nothing in return, and in his life of serving others as a loyal and faithful friend left a bigger void than he could have ever realized.

Stephen A. Dalfino - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ I was introduced to Andy in 1977. I was in 6th grade and a friend told me about a his boy scout troop, so I asked to come along. When I arrived, I saw a large group of boys, 13-18, and all the disorder that one expects with such a group. Suddenly there was a cry "fall in!", and this pulsating throng separated into 4 distinct patrols, silent and standing at attention in formation. After a few minutes of reports they again separated, but now in small groups busy doing activities e.g. preparing for a camping trip.

This was troop 17, and I soon met the scoutmaster Andy. As a young scout he helped me learn how to cook, how to put up a tent, how to get up early, how to fend for myself and also contribute to the larger group. He taught us to hike in snow, climb cliffs and rappel down, and walk with wet feet and not cry about it.

Many thanks Andy for all that you did! You introduced me to the world of nature, adventure, respect and order. It would be hard to overstate the impact you had on my life, and on the lives of many boys in Troop 17.

-Sean

Sean Forde - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

NG

“ In the 15 or more years that I have known Andris, I have admired his profound patriotism, love of The Good, and generosity. But from the first time we spoke I was struck by his willingness to listen, question and think through a new idea or a challenge to an old one, and then to act, when he knew what was right.

You are already missed, Andris, but remain an inspiration to myself and our mutual friends.

Nancy Guice - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RL

“ Although I never met you Andy...
I am the cousin of your dear friend..Tom Coss...
He has told me of your many talents and attributes!
and I'm sure you will be missed by all!
Rest in Peace Andy...
May your "Memory be Eternal"
Ruth Witkovic Lipschutz

Ruth Lipschutz - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KR

“ My condolences to the family. Andy was just a couple of years younger than me growing up at First Lutheran. Impressed with his accomplishment of being an Eagle scout, and grateful for his many years as a scoutmaster. I'm sure that made a positive impact on the lives of many boys. Rest in the Peace of the Lord.

Kurt Rogerson - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ With my family, I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of this wonderful man. I came to know Andy when my son Sean joined Troop 17 of the Boy Scouts at First Lutheran Church in New Britain. Scoutmaster Andris Strazdins spent countless hours training, mentoring and inspiring hundreds of boys in the highest standards of scouting. I have no idea of how many young men attained the Eagle Scout rank under Andy's guidance but I am eternally proud that Sean was one of them. I also know of Andy's deep religious faith and he is now enjoying its rewards in Heaven. That has to be a consolation to you, Edgars, and to all those fortunate to know Andy.

Malo Forde - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ I first met Andy in 1978, when Andy’s boy scout troop 17 of New Britain were planning a high adventure backpacking trip to the white mountains of New Hampshire and was asked if I wanted to come. Not having done much hiking before, I did not know what to expect. This trip was more than I expected, as we backpacked up some of the highest peaks in the White Mountains such as Mount Liberty and Mount Lafayette. This began an adventure of many backpacking adventure trips for over 35 years of climbing the highest peaks in New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, and one of Andy’s favorite areas, the southwest corner of CT. The experiences that we shared with Andy and our hiking friends during these adventures and the obstacles that we had to overcome in the mountains made us more determined. So we set our goals on climbing the New Hampshire 48 4000 footers. Andy, Ray Szeligowski and myself completed that goal and became members of the AMC 48 4000 footer club. We always had to keep an eye on Andy on the trail as not to lose him, as he would stop and socialize with other hikers, or found picking wild berries on the trail. After a hard day of hiking, Andy would look forward to building a big camp fire. and listening to Andy play the harmonica and socializing for hours was priceless. Andy had a deep appreciation for US history and the principles of our founding forefathers that made our country great. We made many trips to historical sites such as revolutionary and civil war battlefields to better appreciate our history. Rarely do you meet someone as special as Andy, someone who was full of life, his sense of adventure., his compassion for helping people. his love of GOD and country. He was a true friend and will be dearly missed.

Michael Giannetti - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DK

“ I was sad to hear of Andy's passing,His playing his harmonica at my retirement party received rave reviews from everybody. I'm glad he could make it.

Also, I will always remember our great conversations. I will miss them.

Dan Kennedy - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

PC

“ Andris, you will be missed my friend. I remember our talks about politics and the things we can do to fix this country. I just wish you were here longer so we can continue that. You were a very sincere friend and also a customer of mine. You will be missed. My condolences to the Strazdins family in this time of mourning. However Andris will always look down on us and always smile. Let's never forget his harmonica playing skill either as he brought sweet music with it. RIP Andris and God Bless!

Peter Ceglaz - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RN

“ I wish to offer my sincere condolences to the Strazdins family and to Andris's many friends. Andris passing has left me with a overwhelming sense of sadness.

Rarely do you meet someone in a lifetime who has been such a profound influence

over you, and sets you on path it's hard to turn away from, the quest for truth. If there is a printing press in heaven, I'm sure Andris will be handing out fliers to everyone there. It will probably only say "God is Love" something that Andris is all about. All about love and all about God.

I meet Andris at Bally's around 4 years ago. I noticed a Daily Mediation Booklet in a locker, and thought someone left it behind, but then I spotted them in a number of lockers. I read one, and found it inspirational. I keep seeing them in lockers and was curious who was leaving them there. One day I spotted Andris planting the seeds and I struck up a conversation with him. That was the day that my awaking began. Everything Andris ever told me was true. At first I was sceptical, then did my own research, only to find out he was right on. Soon I decided, if Andris said it, then it must be true.

The Lord has a very special room for Andris in his mansion. The walls filled with plaques, one for each of the many fine values he is known for.

Loving, Humble, Faithful, Giving, Caring, Sharing, Truthful, Sincere, but the greatest of these is Love.

My dear friend Andris, you will always be in my thoughts and in my prayers, as I reflect on the many fine times we spent together, trying to solve the worlds problems. I will try to pickup the torch, but in no way could ever fill your shoes. You are special and will be sorely missed. Rest in peace my friend, until we meet again.

*Love,
Richard*

Richard Nolan - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ *Andy was a good friend who helped me many times when no one else was there. When I was sick he came to see me. He would always call and check up on me to make sure I was OK. I am single and live alone and at times Andy was all I had. When I had No Food Andy would always stop by with something to eat. When I had problems with my car Andy helped me to get it fixed. When I was Sick and in the nursing home I came out only to find I had No Place To Live At! Andy made sure I did not go into a Homeless Shelter. He helped me to find a hotel room to stay at. It is said that when GOD closes one door he will open another. My door with Andy is closed. I hope and pray that GOD opens a new door for me Soon! He will be missed greatly By ALL! May Andy Always Rest In Peace, AMEN!!!*

TOM COSS - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AY

“ *God strength, Edgars! I met the Strazdins family in 1962 with my cousin Herve, when we walked to their Washington St. flat upon a referral from James Bolton. Among several other more skilled chess players than I, StrazArkadijs, his Latvian father became my mentor. After Peter Kloskowski Andy was one of my oldest friends, as I became chess club president at Taft & Trinity and scheduled friendly matches with the New Britain chess club. Andy was an officer & a gentleman, a man of faith, a good Samaritan, a harmonica player extraordinaire, the treasurer for life for the nbcc, and often tilted at wind mills, but that's why we love him. Godspeed, Major Andris! He finely exemplified my school motto: Non ut sibi ministretur, sed ut ministret!*

Anthony Yablonski - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

FH

“ I don't know why I glanced at the obituaries in today's Hartford Courant but something drew me to them. I was saddened to see Andris' picture and obituary there. I was in the UCONN Army ROTC program with Andris and was commissioned a 2LT in the Infantry with him on May 13, 1973. I saw him some months later in Pensacola, Florida. I was there for Naval training long story and Andris and some other of our UCONN ROTC group had come down from their training at Fort Benning, Georgia to say hi. Every so often I'd think of him and wonder how he and others of our group were doing. I knew him as a good man. I know he will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Frank A. Hollo - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ To my good friend, Andy
We were friends for two decades. My wife and children knew and respected you. Few walked among us with such a high degree of honor, integrity and giving. Thinking of your journey in life brings to mind Bobby Kennedy's profound quote "There are those who look at things and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not". I feel your work among us was not complete, but the Lord needed you for His reasons that we need not analyze. You will be sorely missed by me and many others whose lives you blessed with your presence.

Dennis Bollier - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KS

“ I worked at the Labor Department and knew Andy to be a kind and interesting man. I am sorry to hear of his passing.

Kathleen Sullivan - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RP

“ Goodbye my friend. Played many games of chess and had many great conversations... Everyone loses with you gone.

Richard Pizzoni - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

“Andy had a very long and rich history with the New Britain Chess Club. He joined the club as a teenager, and his involvement in its management started when he was elected treasurer at the age of twenty-three. At that time, he was the youngest member to be elected as an officer. Besides the normal treasurer duties that he performed throughout his forty-two years of devoted service, the longest of any club officer, Andy carried out many other unpaid volunteer tasks. What made Andy's work for the club most impressionable was the fact that he was always enthusiastic and passionate in whatever he did. Furthermore, he could constantly be relied upon to assist his fellow officers with anything and always put the best interests of the membership in mind first. Because of the enormous amount of time and effort that Andy dedicated to the club, in June 2011, the membership honored him with a lifetime membership. Andy's compassionate and selfless attitude and approach to life was also evident beyond the club, as he spent much of his free time, especially during retirement, providing financial support and spiritual comfort to the less fortunate.

Andy enjoyed competing in the slower time-controlled events at the club. However, you just never knew how long a chess game with him would last! Regardless of who you were, he treated everyone with respect and dignity. During the club's social gatherings, Andy would display his comical side by playing songs on his harmonica and regaling his friends with tales and stories from the good old days. It was such a delight to see his boyish charm and to hear his infectious sense of humor enlighten the atmosphere at those events. He truly loved the club in every way possible. The annual business meeting held on June 16 was the last time Andy attended the club.

During his adult life, Andy was an avid traveler and hiker. He frequently visited his favorite historical attractions in New York City and Washington D.C. and spent days with his friends climbing the highest mountains throughout the Northeast. He was an adventurous man and lived life to the fullest. Knowing how Andy

was so active for years made it very difficult to see him decline so quickly in the last month of his life.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the life of Major Andris Strazdins. Andy was an asset to the NBCC and a dear friend to many of our members. He was also highly respected and loved by many whom he associated with at his church and the other organizations to which he belonged.

Andy was an all-around wonderful person. His sudden death was a shock, and he will be deeply missed. May he never be forgotten, and may he rest in eternal peace in Heaven.

The club will be holding a two-week memorial tournament for Andy Strazdins starting on July 21.

Robert Cyr, NBCC Historian, on behalf of the New Britain Chess Club community - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MW

“ To Andy:

You were a dear friend and part of our extended family. The most precious memories I have of you are, your willingness to help so many people in need including us, as well as your kindness love and forbearance that you had for everyone. You always made yourself available to those less fortunate than yourself. I will always remember the time you helped me {Martin} get through the recovery process when I broke my right shoulder in 2007. It meant volumes to me.

You are going to be dearly missed, yet never forgotten.

*Andy's life has inspired me and brought me closer to the Living God
LORD JESUS
CHRIST.*

Bible Scripture of encouragement.

Second Corinthians 5:6 “Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

Love Always,

Martin & Dara Wassik

Martin Wassik - September 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM