

## Remembering Don Gross

Don Gross died in a tragic accident at home on January 7. Don was a very important member of our community and touched many of our lives. The *Beacon* asked everyone to send remembrances or tributes of any length, even as short as a single sentence, for publication in the February issue. Here's what we received.

### Don's Big Heart

I met Don last year when he called me to do some work on one of the garage doors down at the old RP Johnson facility.

I had just met Don, but he made me feel like I had known him all his life. We hit it off right away, and it was Don's big heart that made you feel good to be around him.

I told him I was looking for a new place to run my business out of, and he said, "I got just the building for you." And he did. I rented the old Building Number 2 that day.

From that point on, when I would see Don down at the Blackwater Junction Restaurant or over at the storage buildings, I would always put 10 or 15 minutes aside because Don would love to talk, and I enjoyed talking with him. He was a man of great integrity, and I am so happy to have known him, but so sad that he's gone.

My thoughts and prayers to his family. Don will be missed.

*Jim Buchan*

Granite Garage Doors

### Story Time with Don

Don and I worked together for three years on the Andover Board of Selectmen. The United States Congress should take a page out of our book, because Don and I were at opposite ends of the political spectrum, yet we worked through the issues and always came up with a compromise that would work.

After our regular meetings, fellow selectman Jake Johnson and I always looked forward to "story time with Uncle Don," when he would tell us hair-raising stories about his days on active duty as a police officer in Nashua, and even more hair-raising stories about the politics of public service.

Don always said that if I ever needed to find him, he would be at the counter of the Blackwater Junction Restaurant just about every morning around 9. Don, I hope the food at the counter where you are now is just as satisfying, and the company just as good.

*Vicky Mishcon*

### Champion Christmas Cookie Baker

Don was a sincere man. A simple conversation was all it took to tell that he truly cared about everyone. He never seemed rushed; instead, he was always willing to stop and chat. It was a simple gesture that made one feel important.

He was also a champion Christmas cookie baker who was always willing

to share what he baked. He will be so greatly missed!

*Christina Altensio*

Former teller at Lake Sunapee Bank, Andover

### Don was a Good Person

Don didn't need anyone to think that he was a good person; Don needed to know that he was a good person ... and a good person is exactly what he was.

*Ken Reid*

### "Well, yah ..."

I was blessed to know Don and Karen Gross for several years. I cannot remember a time when visiting that they did not say, "If you or Jean need anything, just call." Sadly, I got to say those same words to Karen at Don's funeral and wake.

When WMUR came to interview me as their neighbor, they knew Don's statewide influence as police chief of Nashua. When they asked me how I remembered Don, I said what anyone else would say: "Don was my friend and always had my back." I'm not sure that I even thought about the big footprint that he had on New Hampshire; he was just my friend.

This was also brought to my attention by one of my patients named Chris. He would meet with Don on Sundays at Don's "office," the Blackwater Junction Restaurant. Chris made note that Don always treated him as "a good friend." Don had that gift, to make you feel like you really were his good friend.

Don's other office was his pickup truck. We would meet frequently on our road, stop, roll down our windows, and talk. Don had what I would call "Donisms." If something was so obvious that even a dummy would understand, he would lean slightly forward with a twinkle in his eye saying, "Well, yah."

I find myself now traveling Kearsarge Mountain Road, checking the horizon for my friend. I miss him, and it hurts; but Karen misses him far more. As time goes on, may Andover, may New Hampshire, echo the words to Karen that I heard from her so often, "If you need anything, just call." Listen closely and you'll hear Don say, "Well, yah."

*Dan Bezon*

Friend, neighbor

### Keep It Simple

Since moving to Andover almost 20 years ago, I have grown and learned an immeasurable amount about what it means to be an active member of a small community. Don was a big part of my growth and learning, and I miss him terribly.

I'm proud to have been a small source of amusement to him over the years. He'd stop at the foot of my driveway, and we'd share a chuckle over my flatlander approach to life on the

See Don Gross on page 26

## Remembering Dr. Don Kaplan

### Andover Lions mourn his loss

#### Andover Lions Club

The members of the Andover Lions Club were saddened with the passing of Andover Lion Don Kaplan. Our sympathies and condolences go out to Nan and the wonderful Kaplan family.

We first met Dr. Don when he was the guest speaker at one of our Lions Club meetings. He spoke of his adventures sailing around Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Bahamas.

Soon he joined our club, and it was a perfect fit for an ophthalmologist concerned about eye care, the blind and visually impaired, and the Lions Club, whose major project efforts are in sight conservation and help for the blind. Dr. Don became very helpful in reviewing the requests from those in need of eye exams and glasses.

Don soon was very active with the club and served on the board of directors and held various offices. He was elected President of the Andover Lions Club in 2004. He was active in the Lions District and was elected President of the Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation of NH.

Don was instrumental in bringing to New Hampshire the Lions International Kidsight eye screening program for children six months to six years of age. With the use of special cameras, Lions Club members could take pictures of the children's eyes, and the photos

would be read by a doctor to determine the need for treatment and possibly avoid the lazy eye and other maladies. Don was that doctor for most of the screening in the state.

Dr. Don was involved in many community projects for many organizations.

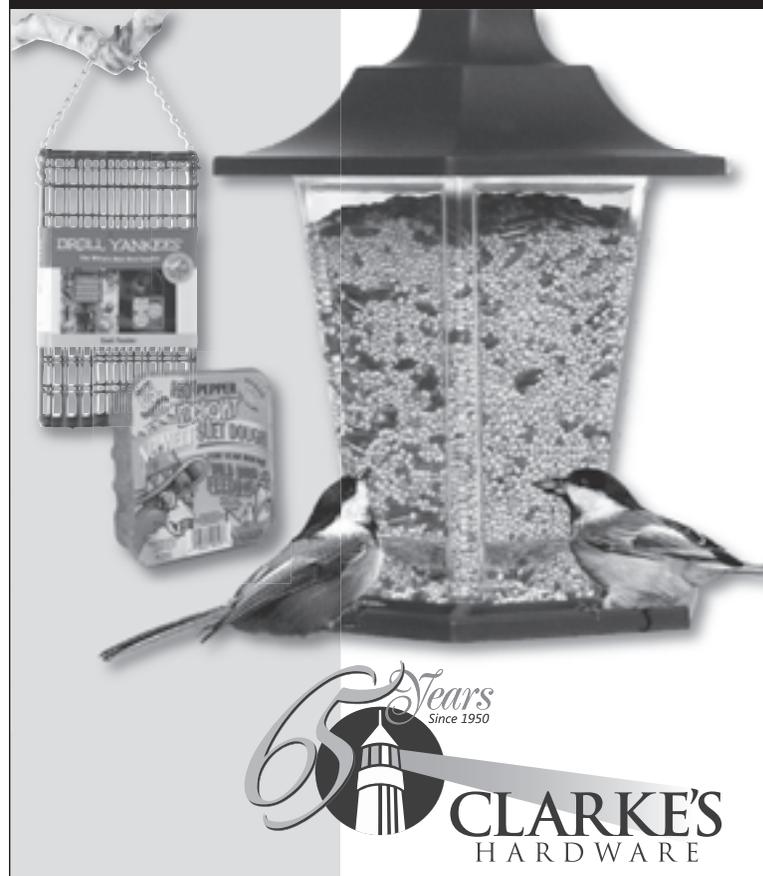
He enjoyed golf and helped with the club's golf tournament. He liked tennis, but we never played. We shared many Fisher Cat baseball games. When the Lions Club sponsored a "Night at the Fisher Cats" on the picnic deck, Dr. Don was a big supporter, bringing people in from foreign lands such as Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Italy to fill the seats.

Don was a friendly guy with a good sense of humor and seemed to fit in with any group, rich or poor, old or young, friendly or not so friendly. He was the epitome of our Lions toast we use in our opening of club meetings: "Not above you, not beneath you, but with you."

We will always remember that Don Kaplan is with us: Good Friend, Outstanding Lion, Great American. God bless him. May he rest in peace.

The Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation of New Hampshire established the Granite State Fellow program to assist Lions Clubs in recognizing people who have provided outstanding service to the community. The Andover Lions Club presented a Progressive Granite State Fellow posthumously to Dr. Don Kaplan. 

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