

REMEMBERING ANDRIS STRAZDINS

Andris “Andy” Strazdins was another great contributor in the annals of the New Britain Chess Club. Like his father, his passionate efforts in this respect tremendously benefited our organization.

Born in Germany, Andy was only a year old when he moved with his family to New Britain, where he resided since 1951. During high school and college, Andy competed on the school chess team, which did quite well under Andy’s leadership. Of course, he could not have had a better mentor than his father!

Andy’s history with the club was one of the longest of any member. He joined the club as a teenager in the 1960s and competed on many team matches and tournaments in his early years. In 1973, he earned second place behind his father in the annual Jan Cendrowski event. Later that year, Andy was elected to the position of club treasurer. At that time, he was the youngest officer in club history. For forty-two years, a club record, Andy worked besides his fellow officers to ensure that the club ran efficiently. Besides his normal treasurer duties, Andy carried out many other



unpaid volunteer tasks. No matter the job, Andy performed it with sheer spirit and enthusiasm, always putting the best interests of the membership first. Because of the enormous amount of time and effort that Andy dedicated to the club, the membership honored him with a lifetime membership in 2011.

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 about the good old days. It was such a delight to see his boyish charm and to hear his infectious sense of humor enliven the atmosphere at those events. He truly loved the club in every way possible. Andy's compassionate and selfless attitude and approach to life was also evident beyond the club, as much of his free time, especially during retirement, was devoted to providing financial support and spiritual comfort to the less fortunate.

Beyond chess, Andy was immensely active in community programs like the boy scouts, the church, and political and environmental causes. He was a busy man who lived life to the fullest, constantly devoting his time to the greater good.

Starting in 2016, the lower section of the Strazdins Cup was held in memory of Andy. The lower section was called the Andy Strazdins Stein.

Andy treated everyone with dignity and respect and had a big heart like his father. On behalf of everyone whose lives were touched by Andy, let us take a moment to reflect on the life of this special person. His spirit lives on!