

# Don Murray's Bridge

January 2013

If you are the social type – one who looks for any occasion to spend time with friends and neighbors – then you probably know Don Murray, President of Avalon's Board of Directors, an Avalon Ambassador, and beloved friend to all.



Don and his wife, Morag, to whom he was married for 54 years, moved to Avalon Village in 2003, when the last cottages on the Wintergreen Court cul-de-sac were still being built. "After looking all around Massachusetts and Maine for a place to retire to, Morag decided on Avalon because it was near our daughter, Allison, who lives in Holden. She was concerned that one day she would be living alone, and if that happened she wanted to be in a nice community that was close to our daughter and her family." The Murrays also chose Avalon because they were impressed with how accommodating Avalon's management was in making changes to their cottage models; customizing them to fit individual needs.

The entire Avalon community was saddened when Morag died in November of 2009 after fighting a six-month battle with cancer. Ironically, it was Don who found himself suddenly living alone. As he was adjusting to his new life as a widower, he was sitting at the dining room table one evening, by himself, thinking about five other neighbors who lived on his street who were probably also doing the same thing: eating alone. "I called them up and said, 'why don't we get together tomorrow evening at the Manor House and have dinner together?'"

The group of neighbors had such a good time that the news quickly spread through the community. Don's phone began to ring. "Why wasn't I invited?" single men and ladies on Heather Way and Thistle Lane asked. "Before I knew it, a monthly singles night was born," Don says. "Someone always brings a bottle of wine and we enjoy a nice time together with a fine meal. Manor House residents have now joined us, too." Singles Night has become so popular that it is now posted on the monthly Activities Calendar to avoid conflicts with other regularly scheduled events!

Bringing people together didn't start with Don's entry into single life, however. For many years, Don and Morag lived in Easton, MA, where Don brought mothers and babies together for the first time, serving as an OB/GYN doctor for 40 years until his retirement in 2001. "I delivered over 9,000 babies during my years in our group practice," he affirmed. "I loved every minute of it."



And then, there's Don's favorite game that brings many friends together: bridge. "I play at the Hammond Street Senior Center twice a week, and with friends at Sugarloaf when I'm over there skiing during the winter. I also reserve the Manor House and host tournaments in the spring and fall at Avalon." With a grin, he added, "There's lots of work involved in organizing the tournaments, especially since folks need lots of reminders at our age." Don travels to other tournaments, too, including those held in his native New Brunswick. "One time I met a nice lady in St. John and I invited her to come to a tournament here, offering my cottage as a place to stay. She showed up with three other ladies, plus there was another lady whom I had similarly invited. The five of them took over my house!"

Thankfully, Don's Allagash cottage is big enough to accommodate many guests, helping to provide him with his most valued bridge – the one that takes him away from loneliness and brings him to many friends, old and new.

# Living their dream: Dwight and Jan Rideout

September 2014



Dwight and Jan Rideout share many things in common, including the mutual friend who matched them together more than 28 years ago, and a life-long passion ... for teaching.

Dwight taught English and social studies at the former Garland St. School in Bangor before starting his 43-year tenure at the University of Maine, where he served for 30 years as the Dean of Students. Jan inspired thousands of students as a teacher of English over her 25-year career, the last 20 spent at Bangor High School. Dwight is retired, but Jan still writes weekly blogs for a website that she and her partner created - CollegeBasics.com. She also enjoys educational consulting for college applicants and their families.

Although the Rideouts lived on Eaton Ridge in Holden during their early years of marriage, they eventually moved to their dream house on Mann Hill, which Jan designed. For 10 years they enjoyed the 8-acre property with its gorgeous views of Bangor and beyond, but one day they started wondering, "Should we move now, or five years from now?"

"We decided to move while we were able to and enjoy some freedom," Dwight said, and they started looking around at different places in the area. The idea of maintenance-free living was appealing, and they also liked the idea of being part of a larger community outside of their immediate neighborhood. Hampden offers the Lura Hoit Pool, a farmer's market, and the Skehan Center among its popular amenities, along with the Edythe L. Dyer Library, located on Avalon's site!

While touring Avalon during the summer of 2013, Jan knew she had found their next dream home when she saw the high-vaulted living room ceilings in the cottage on Wintergreen Court. She and Dwight incorporated their favorite style elements from Holden into their new home, including the vibrant color palette and slate floors installed throughout the kitchen, dining, and living areas. The result was so lovely that their cottage is featured in the latest Avalon Village TV commercial (YouTube>Avalon Village Hampden Maine). They also received approval from the board to install underground electric fencing for their sweet Lhasa Apsos, Georgie and Alfie.



From the start, Jan and Dwight became very active members of the community. Dwight, who has always been involved as a problem solver – the nature of his work with students – was asked to fill a sudden vacancy on Avalon's board of directors. Without hesitation, he agreed. Jan asked to serve on the grounds committee. Through their involvement, they've gained a real appreciation for the community. "We've found so many interesting people who live here, professionally and through their avocations," Dwight said. Jan agreed. "Everyone here enriches everyone else's life. We have a very interesting and diverse sense of community here at Avalon."

Above all else, Dwight and Jan want to contribute like others who live at Avalon: those who create and organize the numerous activities, and others who help wherever they see a need. Like them, the Rideouts want to help fulfill the objective to always grow and improve the community in which they live.