



We lost a friend and our barber Monday morning when Keith Gagnon was found dead in his Labor Temple shop, Union Harbor Hair. It was a tough day for many of us who knew him well after what I think was 5.5 years of his buying the shop. He was only in his mid-40s or so. I was really sad when I happened to see them gurney him out about three hours after a customer found him.

It's odd how things like this strike different people. Some of us hurt yet the next day like he had been next of kin. Others move on quickly even if they knew and liked him.

Death isn't odd. We'll all face it either aware or unaware, like the dying paper birch in the yard or the mosquito we slap on the side of our face.

I really liked Keith and his quirky personality. He wasn't like most people you meet. His shop was less than 50 strides down the hall from where I make my living.

Keith gave me my flattops or other cuts since he started in the Labor Temple. His haircuts were always done with a lot of chatter, even on days when I just wanted to close my eyes and take a break. It wasn't Keith's fault, we enjoyed each other's company.

His dogs always greeted me and he always asked, "How's Yarde" my Huskie-something that he met at the house on a snowshoeing visit. "How's Jennifer" was always in the conversation. She remembered with tears last night how he loaded his plate with her great homemade pizza and ate and said "Mmmmmm" and to me, "Dude, how come you're not fat like me with Jennifer's cooking."

We'd talk about fixing things, finding parts, beer was an important topic, probably second to relationships, human and animal, and then food. Keith lived off the electrical grid and loved using his computer at work. He was an EBay and Netflix guy and everything else on the Internet.

His shop was quiet, few in the waiting chairs. If someone was I could always come back. We both liked that.

Some of us with needs, psychological, emotional, go ahead, figure out our problems, get them taken care of in a barber's chair, even on days when we just want a haircut and quiet. I'll miss Keith Gagnon, a lot more than his haircuts just down the hall next to the bathroom where I could look in to see if it was a good time. It was always a good time. He was always upbeat.

It's easy to get your haircut.

It's hard to lose a young friend.

