

LAKE PLACID NEWS

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Bill Barnes is Rotary's new area governor



Bill Barnes (Photo provided)

In July, Rotary Club of Lake Placid member Bill Barnes was appointed as the new area governor.

In a recent interview, Bill shares his thoughts and reasons for taking on this important role.

How long have you been a member of Rotary?

I joined Rotary when my wife Chris and I retired here seven years ago. I'd never been a Rotary member yet felt it was a good way to meet new people and get involved in the local community.

Four years ago, I served as club president, which allowed me to better understand the importance of the work Rotary does on a local, national and international level.

Why did you want to take on the role of area governor?

The more I'm involved in Rotary, the more I see the incredible impact it makes strengthening our community both locally and globally. I want my years of experience as a Rotarian to help provide inspiration, motivation and guidance.

What are your main responsibilities as area governor?

I report directly to the district governor. The responsibilities span the four area Rotary Clubs, namely, Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, AuSable Valley and Tupper Lake.

We're part of a huge district which covers the North Country, Quebec and up into Northern Ontario. Currently, there are 65 clubs in the district, with a membership totaling over 1,700.

Because it's challenging for district governors to visit and keep up to date with all the clubs, they rely heavily on their area governors.

There are 12 of us in our district. We act as conduits, keeping the district governor informed with what's going on in our area, as well as making our

area clubs feel connected to the district. We learn from each other and look to build some synergy between the clubs.

My predecessor, Jenn Grisi from the Saranac Lake club, initiated a club president's monthly meeting. Every month the four presidents get together to discuss activities, challenges, and how they might work together or support each other's local projects.

What are the biggest challenges you face during your three-year term?

First, I need to establish a relationship with the four clubs. I want the club members to see me as a resource. I want them to know and trust me, so they feel comfortable to ask for information and support.

I don't want to be seen as someone who asks them to do things they don't want to do.

Each club likes a certain autonomy, which means they might resist specific rules and regulations the district requires. For example, these include annual goal setting, keeping records updated, and attending various training programs.

My main goal is to help bridge the gap between Rotary International and the local clubs. I want people to know that I'm here to support them. I want to continue the great work Jenn Grisi did to help the four area clubs share ideas and projects to help each other in whatever they can.

I want to make sure that our members stay focused on Rotary's core values of fellowship, service, diversity, integrity, and leadership.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Rotary Club of Lake Placid now meets via videoconference on Thursday mornings from 7:20 to 8:30 a.m. If you are interested in attending a meeting, email rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com.
